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MY SERVICE IN THE INDIAN ARMY—AND AFTER

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[illegible] IN THE INDIAN ARMY AND AFTER

By

[illegible] SIR J. LUTHER VAUGHAN, K.C.B.

[illegible] ARMY

[illegible]

LONDON

[illegible] & CO. LTD

1934

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MY SERVICE IN THE INDIAN ARMY— AND AFTER

By

GENERAL SIR J. LUTHER VAUGHAN, K.C.B

INDIAN ARMY

HONORARY COLONEL OF THE 58TH VAUGHAN'S RIFLES (FRONTIER FORCE)

Forsan et haec olim meminisse juvabit

LONDON

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TO

LIEUT.-COLONEL F. P. L. WHITE

LATE COMMANDANT

AND THE OFFICERS OF THE 58TH VAUGHAN'S RIFLES

(FRONTIER FORCE)

THIS UNPRETENDING RECORD OF SERVICE

IN THE INDIAN ARMY—AND AFTER

IS DEDICATED BY

THE AUTHOR

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Preface

IN committing to print these notes of my long service in the Indian Army and after, my object is not to write the story of my life, for I am aware that it has not been full enough of important or startling incidents to make it worthy of formal record. My object is rather to popularize, so to say, the Indian Army, and to show the present and future generations of Indian officers that an honourable career lies before them, and that the comparatively humble duties of a regimental officer, if performed from first to last with zeal and intelligence, will, in the long run, lead—not perhaps to fame—but to fair repute, and even honour. I desire also to show, by my own example, how steadfast service in the Indian Army, even though it may not lead to high and conspicuous command, such, for instance, as fell to the lot of Lord Roberts and many others, may yet be a school to fit an officer for future active employment of an interesting if non-military kind; and, again, how, as the mere reporter of events in the field, he may win the hearty approbation of such highly competent judges of military reporting as the conductors of the *Times*. Concurrently with these two objects, I am desirous of doing honour to the Punjab Frontier Force,[1] in which I served for twenty years, and the early history of which is, I think, worth preserving. I believe that it shows what can be

[1] The name by which it was known for more than half a century, though now lost.

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accomplished in the way of training the more martial races of India to military service by earnest men who are not hampered by too much red tape, and are capable of producing new ideas and putting them into practice. Such were the men who brought the Punjab Frontier Force to the high state of efficiency which made it, in the great Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, a potent agent for the restoration of order in India, and a valuable reinforcement for the outnumbered British troops. Since 1857 the Punjab Frontier Force has greatly lost its distinctive character in the general improvement which has taken place in the whole Native army. I claim for the Frontier Force, however, that its example has had no small share in bringing about this improvement. By the recent renumbering of the Indian Army, the Force has now lost much of its former individuality, which is one more reason why its early history should be preserved.

Having relieved myself, I trust, by this preamble, from a possible imputation of personal vanity, it remains for me to acknowledge the debt of gratitude which I owe to Mr. Robert S. Rait, of New College, Oxford, for having superintended these pages through the press, and for giving me much useful advice and assistance generally. Mr. Rait is favourably known as the author, among other things, of a much-needed life of Lord Gough, which has been received with general approval, and which has disposed, once and for all, of the charge of hot-headed generalship so freely brought against that distinguished soldier in connexion with his Indian campaigns. I was able to render Mr. Rait some trifling assistance when he was writing Lord Gough's life, and he has rewarded me in this generous manner.

THE ALBANY,
May, 1904.

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Contents

CHAP.		PAGE
	PREFACE	VII
I	EARLY LIFE	1
II	A SEPOY REGIMENT OF THE LINE, 1841. .	11
III	THE PUNJAB FRONTIER FORCE. 1850–5 . .	26
IV	THE TURKISH CONTINGENT. 1854–6 . .	49
V	THE INDIAN MUTINY, 1857	66
VI	AFTER THE MUTINY. 1860–3	84
VII	THE UMBEYLA CAMPAIGN, 1863. 1863–8 . .	92
VIII	THE END OF THE UMBEYLA CAMPAIGN . .	113
IX	QUIET FRONTIER LIFE	121
X	THE EXPEDITION TO THE BLACK MOUNTAIN, 1868	132
XI	BRIGADE AND DIVISIONAL COMMANDS . .	144
XII	A NEW DEPARTURE	159
XIII	A SECOND NEW DEPARTURE	174
XIV	AFGHANISTAN CAVAGNARI AND YAKUB KHAN .	186
XV	THE PERSIAN GULF AND BAGDAD . .	199
XVI	WITH ROBERTS AT KABUL. 1879–80 . .	212
XVII	KABUL TO KANDAHAR : AN HISTORIC MARCH .	229
XVIII	SOUTH AFRICA, 1881 : A BITTER PILL . .	241

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CONTENTS

		PAGE
L'Envoi	. . . . .	255
Appendix I	Attack on the Asmai Heights, Kabul, December 14, 1879	257
„ II	The Afghan Attack on Sherpur, December 23, 1879	260
„ III	The Events at Kabul of December 1879	269
„ IV	Kabul	278
„ V	General Roberts' March from Kabul to Kandahar	284
„ VI	The Battle of Kandahar, September 1, 1880	286
„ VII	The Transvaal	294

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List of Illustrations

THE AUTHOR . . . . . *Frontispiece*

PLAN OF SHERE ALI'S CANTONMENT OF SHERPUR *To face p.* 224

PLAN OF THE BATTLE OF KANDAHAR . . „ *p.* 238

MAP OF THE NORTH-WEST FRONTIER OF INDIA „ *p.* 292

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CHAPTER I

Early Life

I SHALL begin by saying that my father was Edward Thomas Vaughan, M.A., once a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, and later vicar of St. Martin's, Leicester, and rector of Foston, in the same county. My family claim direct descent from Henry Vaughan, commonly called Henry Vaughan, Silurist, whose grave is to be seen in the pretty churchyard of Llansaintfried, on the banks of the Usk, in Breconshire. After a youth partly spent in the Royalist camps of Charles the First's time, the poet passed the closing years of his life in the practice of the modest profession of a country doctor, and the house in which he lived, Newton, is still to be seen on the banks of the Usk. Medicine evidently ran in the family, for the poet's grandson, Dr. William Vaughan, was Court physician to William and Mary, and Dr. William Vaughan's descendant in the fourth generation was Dr. Henry Vaughan of Leicester, a physician of wide reputation in the Midland Counties at the end of the eighteenth century.

Dr. Henry Vaughan was father of the well known Court physician of the Georgian era, Sir Henry Halford, Bart. Sir Henry changed his family name to Halford, when he inherited, by the favour of a relation on his mother's side—Sir Charles Halford, Bart., of Wistow, Leicestershire—the valuable Wis-

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tow estate.[1] Dr. Henry Vaughan, of Leicester, had other sons besides Sir Henry, two of whom rose to high rank in the legal and diplomatic professions; the late Mr. Justice Vaughan, a former judge, was one, and Sir Charles Vaughan, whose last appointment was that of Minister at Washington, was the other. My father was the youngest of seven brothers. All the sons of that generation were educated at Rugby, and I and three of my brothers have also been alumni of the same school. My mother was a daughter of John Pares, Esq., of the Newark, Leicester, and Hopwell Hall, Derbyshire, a large landed proprietor in Leicestershire and Derbyshire, and the founder of the once well known Pares' Leicestershire bank, now, like so many other country concerns, merged in one of the leviathan banks of London.

* * * * *

I was nine years old when my father died, and perhaps his death saved my brothers and me from the perils of a private education. I was the fourth son of a large family, the second son being the late Master of the Temple and Dean of Llandaff, Dr. Charles Vaughan. I was sent as a small boy to the well known Grammar School at Oakham: and, two years later, I followed two elder brothers to Rugby, then under the head-mastership of Dr. Arnold.

* * * * *

My school days at Rugby, which lasted for three years and a half, were pleasant, though I do not share in the enthusiasm for his school-life at Rugby which the author of *Tom Brown's Schooldays* felt. I never got beyond the form then known as the Middle-fifth, and therefore never came under the

[1] This property has now been alienated from my family by the strange whim of the late Sir Henry Halford, who first cut off the entail, and then willed the property to a personal friend unconnected with the family.

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direct influence of Dr. Arnold, who was almost a stranger to all boys below the sixth form. Like the other boys of my standing in the school, I regarded him with respect and some fear, but without that adoration which some of his more advanced pupils have professed. It has been said that Dr. Arnold was a man to whom boys felt it impossible to lie. I was never exposed to the temptation, but suspect that if I had been, it would have been the hatred of lying in which I was educated, and no occult influence in Dr. Arnold's personality, which would have deterred me from telling him an untruth.

* * * * *

My brothers and I succeeded one another as boarders at a house long extinct, called "Townsend's" in the market-place. The late Dean of Westminster —Arthur Stanley—was head of the house, and I was one of his fags; but my duties, with such a boy as Stanley for a master, were almost nominal. Fagging at public schools, as it was known to older generations, was going out, and at the time I speak of, was generally limited to a few light and trivial duties, such as sweeping out the master's study, preparing his breakfast, etc. I have always maintained a deep reverence and esteem for my former master, and am an ardent admirer of his theological and other works. I met him in after life when he was Dean of Westminster, but he never showed any particular sympathy for his old fag, though his sister was then married to my brother, the Master of the Temple. My house-master, Townsend, an ex-solicitor, was sufficiently respected by the boys to be able to maintain order in the house, but had little or nothing to do with us otherwise. He was succeeded, whilst I was still at Rugby, by one of the under-masters in the school, the Rev. P. W. Powlett, to whom I owe no gratitude. I believe my character was fairly good during the three and a half

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years of my life in Townsend's and Powlett's house, and that I passed through my forms, from the lower-third to the middle-fifth, with fair rapidity and credit. I was fond of all games and exercises, and was known as a good runner, always well up in our paper-chases. I should perhaps have followed my elder brothers to the University, though strongly disposed to a naval or military life, had it not been for an unfortunate incident.

* * * * *

In those pre-railway times it took three days for the boys to disperse to their homes at the end of each half-year. On the first day, the boys who were farthest from their homes took their departure. They were followed on the second day by those whose homes were somewhat less remote. On the third day, the remaining boys left. Each boy before leaving was supplied by his house-master with the sum judged sufficient to carry him to his home, or with such sum as his parents might direct. The boys leaving on the first or second days were accustomed to invite their school-friends, who might not be leaving till the third day, to accompany them as far as Dunchurch, then the great coaching town for Rugby. At Dunchurch they would spend any superfluous journey-money in regaling their friends whilst waiting the arrival of their different coaches. To one of these invitations it was my fate to fall a victim. The port of the roadside inn of those days (and port was the favourite liquor of the schoolboys of my time), was proverbial for its execrable quality. I am ashamed to say that I returned to Rugby in a state of semi-intoxication. An ill-natured servant informed my house-master, Powlett, of my condition, and Powlett took the very unnecessary step of sending for Dr. Arnold. The head-master, with what I venture to think equal want of tact, summoned me then and there to his

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presence. In the army a wise regulation requires that when a soldier is discovered to be the worse for liquor, he should be placed under restraint without provocative question or treatment, lest he should be tempted to insubordinate act or language. Not so, however, Dr. Arnold. To some question he addressed me I returned, I suppose, a foolish or impertinent answer. "You are drunk, Sir," was the rejoinder, and the incident was for the time being closed. In the course of the holidays a letter was received from Dr. Arnold intimating that I must not return to Rugby.

* * * * *

Every one can form his own opinion as to the wisdom of Dr. Arnold's treatment of a single offence of this kind. I considered, and still consider, myself to have been treated both harshly and unwisely, and believe that many boys would have been ruined for life by it. Happily for me I took the matter differently. What I thought harsh and unjust treatment inspired me with a resolution to prove that the stigma cast upon me was undeserved. For many subsequent years this resolution guided my conduct. I am happy to know that I soon lived down the slur under which my summary removal from Rugby laid me.

* * * * *

If I have just reason to resent the treatment I received at Dr. Arnold's hands, and if I do not hold him in unmixed reverence, I have nothing but pleasant and grateful recollections of Bonamy Price, the master of the form I had reached when I left Rugby. The quiet rebuke he once gave me for a stupid ebullition of passion has often recurred to my memory, and has served to check the irritableness which the petty vexations of military life are apt to generate.

* * * * *

Notwithstanding the check which my education

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had received by the Rugby incident, it was still open to me—thanks to the kindness of relatives—to study for one of the learned professions. I read for some months with the late Dr. Tyrrell, afterwards bishop of Newcastle (Australia), then a curate near Leicester, and imbibed from him a fair knowledge and love of the Greek and Latin classics. But the kind of study which interested me much more was of a military nature. The profession of a sailor in my schooldays, and of a soldier later, exercised in turn an enormous fascination over me; but the knowledge that my excellent mother was unable to make me the allowance necessary to live in tolerable comfort as an officer, seemed to forbid me a military career. I had no desire to expatriate myself for the best part of my life; but when in 1840 a cadetship in the Bengal Army was offered me, I accepted it without hesitation, and commenced a life which has since entirely satisfied my military aspirations, and led me to a fair degree of honour and competence.

* * * * *

I left England for India on October 12, 1840, by sailing vessel of course, for the overland route was still undeveloped. As illustrating the great difference between a passage to India then and now, I make the following extracts from a home letter (written at three different dates during the voyage) which now lies before me.

December 11, 1840 (61 days from Portsmouth). "We shall be well round the Cape in a week's time, and I really think six or seven weeks from now will bring us to Madras."

December 17, 1840 (68 days from Portsmouth). "We are fairly round the Cape now, which is such a delight to think of; from four to six more weeks will, I believe, bring us to Madras. This is delightful to think of."

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Madras, January 29, 1841 (110 days from Portsmouth). "Hurrah, hurrah! here we are at last!" I arrived at Calcutta on February 21, 1841 (133 days from Portsmouth!).

* * * * *

My ambition when I landed at Calcutta was to be gazetted to one of the two European regiments[1] (as they were called) of the Bengal Army. My mind was filled with the desire of serving with English soldiers, the successors of those whose doughty deeds in the Peninsula and at Waterloo had first fired me with the wish to be a soldier. I made an early application to the Adjutant-General to this effect, but afterwards cancelled it by the advice of those into whose hands I fell on arrival at Calcutta, and accepted, without appeal, my nomination to an ensigncy in the 21st Native Infantry. Probably my advisers were right, though I did not think so at the time. If a man's career is cast in India, it may be better for him to enter into early fellowship with the Natives; to put himself in the way to learn their language, and to endeavour to understand their character. It may be that in this way he has a better chance of qualifying himself for future high employment than if, for sentimental reasons, he limited his ambition to becoming a pattern officer in an English regiment. My early initiation into the language and ways of the Native soldiers has doubtless been useful to me, and helped to fit me for the appointment I was destined for many years to hold.

* * * * *

[1] The European regiments on the Company's establishment must be distinguished from H.M. regiments serving in India. The two establishments were quite separate; e.g., there was a Quarter-Master-General of Queen's troops and another of Company's troops. The Company had, at this time, about 5,600 European Infantry and the same number of Artillery divided among the Bengal, Madras and Bombay Armies.

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I had been furnished by friends at home with excellent introductions for Indian use, and I received some notice, which flattered me greatly, from the then Commander-in-Chief, Sir Jasper Nicolls, and his family. I was, of course, plainly told that, as an ensign who had not yet joined his regiment, nothing could be done for me; and in justice to myself I may say I had no thought of asking for anything except to be allowed to join a Sepoy regiment then under orders for service in China. When this was very properly refused, I was only anxious to join my new regiment at once.

The same friends who adjured me not to think of joining a European regiment were now urgent that I should proceed to Moradabad in the North-west Provinces where my regiment was, in the quickest, and therefore the most expensive way. Accordingly they counselled me to travel by what was called "palankeen dawk," which meant that I should first buy a palankeen (*Anglicé* litter) and then arrange through the Post Office for relays of bearers at every ten or twelve miles for the whole distance from Calcutta to Moradabad, 800 or 1000 miles. The total expense of the journey, as I found on my arrival at my destination, was about £90 in English money, or at the rate of £9 for every day of the journey—a pretty sum to spend out of an ensign's pay of five shillings and threepence a day!

* * * * *

Nor was the expense all. The journey was not performed without serious adventure, which I thus described in a letter home, dated April 11, 1841, and which is now before me.

"Tuesday, March 23, 1841. To-day my first adventure. I was awakened out of a sound sleep by the bearers coming to ask for the present they always receive at the end of every stage. When I had given it, I found that no fresh bearers were

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waiting for me, and there was I, set down in the middle of the road, quite helpless. The dawk or staging bungalow was half a mile behind. The bearers who brought me the last stage refused to take me there unless I gave them a rupee, which was of course an infernal extortion, but I was forced to submit. There I found a gentleman who told me that the whole village was depopulated by cholera, and that I should get no bearers: so I made an agreement with my last bearers at an immense price to take me to the next village. These fellows were very mutinous, and I don't believe they would have fulfilled their part of the bargain if I had not made them strip off their upper garments and taken possession of them myself until they got there. I expect a great deal of trouble with them as it is. This happened at 5 a.m., just as it was getting light. I have to wait whilst the bearers rest, and so I have amused myself by sketching the dawk bungalow before breakfast, but fear it is not worth sending."

* * * * *

"Wednesday 24. As I had expected, my adventures were not at an end. When I got to the next village not a bearer was to be had, so just imagine unfortunate me in the middle of India quite alone and scarcely able to make the commonest command intelligible. To add to all, it was just setting in for a very dark night. But I have not told you the worst. The village, and all the villages along the line of road for forty miles, are laid waste by cholera. As I came into this one I saw here and there twelve or fourteen dead bodies in the most dreadful state you can imagine—one with the leg eaten quite away, and all of a livid green colour and exhaling such an odour under the tropical sun, now just setting, as you have no idea of. On the trees near sat a number of vultures completely gorged, and on and near the bodies were a number more still tearing

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the flesh from the carcases, and here and there a jackal slinking up, and only waiting for night to join the vultures. If I had found bearers waiting and ready to carry me from such a horrid place, it would have been bad enough; but to find no way of getting on, not a friend near, and knowing that the cholera was in every house in the place, was too much. Besides, the smell almost killed me, and it was not until I had taken a glass of brandy 'neat' that I could get over it. I then lighted a cigar, and set out in quest of some bullock-carts, or something of that kind. At last I got three, and with my own hands—for the natives are as slow and helpless as children—I put my palankeen and *pettarahs*[1] upon them, and with a torch and two men to drive the bullocks I set out for the next bungalow. There to my great joy I found my friend of the morning, who was almost dead from the smell, and I never saw any one so grateful as he was for a bottle of eau de Cologne which I fortunately had. Here I put up for the night, and, as you may imagine, was haunted by the sights of the day. All night I could not persuade myself that I had not got cholera. Next morning I again set out, and, after marching some miles, at last got bearers who took me to the next stage, where I have again found my bearers all right. How long they will continue so I don't know."

* * * * *

Without further adventure I joined my regiment at Moradabad.

* * * * *

[1] Tin boxes for carrying a traveller's personal luggage, which are balanced on a bamboo pole and carried on a man's shoulder.

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CHAPTER II

A Sepoy Regiment of the Line, 1841

1841–50

MY early experience of service with a Native Infantry regiment of the period was interesting but not exciting. I was taught my drill by a worthy veteran drill-sergeant, who, like many others of his class, had enlisted in the Indian service after a *jeunesse orageuse*, in order to lose all touch with family and friends. A keen desire to be brought on the roster for duty, and to take part in our regimental parades, soon carried me over the trifling difficulties of rudimentary drill. In the dearth of regimental officers common at that period in the Indian Army, it was not long before I even obtained temporary charge of a company, a charge of which I was intensely proud. Amongst my brother officers I quickly became acquainted with one who had preceded me by some years at Rugby. He had left a brilliant reputation for what we boys estimated so highly, pluck and skill with his fists. A fistic encounter which he had once had with a noted bully of the town twice his age and height, was the talk of successive generations of boys; and "Nevvy Joe" as he was called, in imitation of the aunt with whom he resided, was a hero of the first water. This officer—Chambers by name—invited me to live with him. He was on the staff of the regiment as Interpreter and Quarter-master, and being an excellent linguist, he soon inspired me with the wish to pass, like himself, the examination in the Native language which is the necessary passport

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to all extra-regimental employment. My letters, written home at the period, teem with expressions of admiration for this officer and gratitude for his kindness. Besides the skill in boxing which had made his name famous at Rugby, Chambers was skilled in all the athletics of the Native gymnasium; and one of my earliest amusements after joining was to learn the Native exercises and feats of strength which correspond to what is taught in European gymnasia.

* * * * *

I need not say much about the other officers of the regiment. The Lieutenant-Colonel commanding was a veteran of a long extinct school of Indian officers. He was indifferent to everything but the monthly transfer to his banking account of a round sum of 1,000 rupees, his few wants being supplied by the difference between that sum and his monthly pay. He bored us youngsters by his interminable stories all about nothing, which he delighted to make us listen to at mess whilst he smoked his twice-filled hookah. He troubled himself little about the efficiency of his officers, or the appearance and discipline of the regiment, the command of which he left almost entirely to the Adjutant. His military knowledge was confined to a dozen manœuvres of our then drill-book, which once or twice a week he put the regiment through, allowing them to be very indifferently performed, and garnishing the performance with a few testy ejaculations of disapproval. After parade he retired to his bungalow, and was rarely visible again, even to his Adjutant, until the bugle sounded for mess. The Colonel's long connexion with the regiment, and the easiness of his rule, gained for him, in spite of his shortcomings, a certain amount of respect and influence with the men, and I came to recognize a sort of dogged independence in his character which redeemed him from contempt.

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Of the three captains present with the regiment, the two senior were scarcely more modern than the Colonel, and performed, with the ease and indifference of long use, their simple regimental duties. The third, Arthur Spottiswoode, a gentleman and a sportsman, was the instructor and guide of us boys in the pursuit of small game, and the use of the gun generally, as well as our kind adviser in more serious matters. He early saw in me a future Adjutant of the regiment, and turned my young ambition in that direction. A future note will tell of his tragic end. Of the subalterns, my friend Chambers was *facile princeps*, and set us a splendid example of all that English officers ought to be. The remaining subalterns were of a good class, whose energies only required to be properly directed to make them a credit to the service: but military ardour they had none, and when the few duties required of them had been perfunctorily performed, they spent their time in riding and shooting, and in the amusements congenial to most English youths of their age and position.

* * * * *

It was a great disappointment to me, who had entered the army with the most high-flown ideas of a soldier's life, to find how little a love for their profession, or a care for military distinction, entered into the thoughts of my brother officers, young or old. The old, kind and worthy as they were, had yet the air of men who were tired to death of the small duties of military life, and only desired to put off the red coat for ever; the young, of men who regarded their few military duties as interfering with the pleasures to which they were entitled. Alas, poor comrades! In one way or another you have (1904) all—with one exception [1]—ingloriously passed away, and have left no mark behind you!

* * * * *

[1] Major-General G. N. Cave, Indian Army.

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The 21st Native Infantry, as I found it in 1841, was perhaps not a fair sample of the Bengal Infantry of the period. It is particularly true of a Native Infantry regiment that it is what the commanding officer chooses to make it. I have described, I hope not unfairly, my commanding officer. The two senior Captains were respectively of thirty-two and thirty years' service. The four senior Lieutenants were all brevet captains in virtue of having served from fifteen to twenty years. The regiment had not been on active service since the siege of Bhurtpore under Lord Combermere in 1826; and for the last three years had been even without the emulation inspired by serving with other regiments; for Moradabad was a single regiment station. Although I do not believe that the best Native regiment of 1841 was comparable in any point to the regiments of 1904, yet there were, perhaps even then, some of which no army need be ashamed. That fine old soldier, General Nott, wrote of his "beautiful regiments," as he called them, at Kandahar in 1841; and it is hard to believe that the Native Infantry regiment of Sale's "Illustrious Garrison" was not a well commanded and well disciplined body of men. But young as I was in the service, I felt dissatisfied and disappointed with the 21st, which in every point fell far short of my ideal.

* * * * *

In the winter of 1841 I underwent my first experience in route-marching, the 21st being ordered in course of relief to Berhampore, a single regiment station 120 miles from Calcutta. At Berhampore, in spite of many temptations, for I was as fond of riding and shooting as any of my comrades, I kept resolutely to the study of the Native languages; and before I had been two years with the regiment I passed the examination at the College of Calcutta, which entitled me to the letters P.C. after my name

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in the army list. What my kind patron, Sir Jasper Nicolls, was able to do for me he now did. He sent me as acting Interpreter and Quarter-master to a regiment at Dinapore; subsequently to one at Juanpore; and finally to the 53rd N.I. at Meerut. Then a bit of real good luck befell me.

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I had been three or four months with the last-named regiment when a Field Force was ordered to assemble at Agra in the North-west Provinces, for the purpose of enforcing reason on Scindia, the powerful chief of the feudatory State of Gwalior. Scindia maintained at his capital, Gwalior, a considerable force of Artillery, Cavalry, and Infantry recruited from the same sources, or nearly so, as our own Sepoy Army, and dressed and drilled in imitation of it. The fortress of Gwalior—Scindia's stronghold—is one of the most renowned Native fortresses of India; and it was anticipated that Scindia would not submit to the requirements of the British Government without a severe struggle. I was still smarting under the disappointment of having arrived in India too late for the stirring events in Afghanistan from 1839–41, and was resolved to be in good time in applying for some appointment, I cared not what, with the army which was to deal with Scindia. I received a favourable reply, and was shortly after gazetted to a minor appointment in the Commissariat department attached to the 3rd Division under Major-General J. H. Littler. It was not the kind of appointment I desired, because it did not necessarily take me into the fighting line; but I remedied this by at once applying to General Littler to be allowed to serve as an extra A.D.C. on his staff, in case of his division being engaged. This General Littler kindly consented to, and accordingly, on December 29, 1843, the day on which the battles of Maharajpore and Punniar were fought, I joined the

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General's staff, mounted on a powerful country-bred horse, and found myself in the position I desired.

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An account of the share I bore in the first of the above battles, which I wrote at the time and sent home for the benefit of friends, now lies before me. It is headed "An account of the Engagement at Maharajpore, December 29, 1843, as far as I was an eye-witness to it."

J. L. Vaughan, Lieut. 21st Regt. N.I., Acting A.D.C. to Major-General Sir J. H. Littler, Commanding 3rd Division.

As an historical account of the battle my manuscript has, of course, no value, but as a record of what befell me personally, and of the feelings of a young officer in battle for the first time, it is perhaps not without interest. It shows also how bright the fire of professional zeal burnt within me, and perhaps explains the modest measure of success which I have since obtained in my profession. Here is the passage in which I describe the advance to attack the village of Maharajpore.

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"And now began a scene which I had often burned to be a sharer in: as we (the 39th Foot and the 56th Native Infantry) advanced, they got our range exactly, and every shot came plump into the column. I speak of the 39th, as I was with them, the 56th being more to the right. If it had not been that the ground was very soft (having been lately ploughed up, and chiefly covered with young wheat) the ricochet of the shot must have killed many more. The men generally fell by twos, front and rear rank men; of course we could not stop then to render them any assistance, so the poor fellows were left where they fell, to take their chance of reaching the field hospital in the rear. It seemed an awful while

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before we got to the village; when 300 or 400 yards from it, the order was given to deploy into line."

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"About the time we deployed into line they commenced firing grape, canister, old iron, horse-shoes, etc., and anything they could cram in, and here we lost most of the men who fell. The sound of the shells was unmistakable, even to a novice, and anything but pleasant. However they were quickly stopped by the British bayonets of the 39th and 56th. The battery presented a most curious sight. The guns, which were painted blue and red, were blackened with smoke, and at the foot of each lay ten or twelve men on whom the bayonet had left its deadly mark."

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Then I relate a personal adventure which occurred later in the action, and very nearly brought my career to a close.

"At this moment I was ordered by the General to go to the officer commanding the 56th, and direct him to dress his regiment ready for the rush into the guns. I delivered the message, but in returning to the General's side, my horse, which had been in a very excited state throughout, became perfectly unmanageable, and went straight away for the enemy's battery! I saw that my only chance was to pull him up instantly, so stooping forward I laid hold of the head-stall, and wrenched his head round. In doing this my curb-bit came in two! I can only suppose that the horse was as much surprised as myself, for it quieted him at once. I dismounted, waited till the 39th came up, and then, letting him go (for a led horse would be rather an encumbrance in charging a battery), I fell in with the Grenadiers of the 39th, and had the honour of making the final charge with them."

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My account concludes in these words :—

"I do not make any mention of the horrors of the battle—the dreadful wounds exhibited both by horses and men. They are such as I shall never forget, and yet with all this I would willingly sacrifice everything I possess, or may possess hereafter, for one more day like December 29, 1843."

The original manuscript from which the foregoing extracts have been taken now lies before me. On the back it bears the following endorsement, which I transcribe to show how deeply at that day was ingrained in us a sense of the military iniquity of "writing to the papers!" It will be read with amusement in the twentieth century!

"MY DEAR E.—I confide this account of the action at Maharajpore to you in the *certainty* that you will never allow any one to read it who might be likely to think it worth putting into the newspapers. Pray never let any one take a copy even. It is intended *solely* for *yourself*."

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The campaign began and ended with the two battles of Maharajpore and Punniar, both fought on the same day, one under the personal command of the future Lord Gough, the Commander-in-Chief; and the other under that of General Sir John Grey, whose army was approaching the capital, Gwalior, from another side. When a Governor-General of India accompanies an army in the field, as in this case Lord Ellenborough did, a victory enables the conditions of peace to be settled quickly. Before the end of the month which followed the battles, the troops, which had fought in both, were on their way home to their several stations. A medal, or rather a bronze star, made from the captured guns, was decreed in memory of the two battles, and Lord Ellenborough displayed his taste both in the

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form of the decoration and the ribbon from which it was to be worn suspended. By the undeserved kindness of General Littler, my name was mentioned in the Divisional dispatch, to my immense gratification, and I had gained my first medal! I am afraid it was owing chiefly to the desire to exhibit this decoration as quickly as possible to my comrades of the 21st, that I resolved to rejoin my regiment instead of returning to my duties, as I might have done, with the 53rd N.I. at Meerut. I had in my boyhood read in one of Marryat's novels of a young hero who, after his first action, returned to his friends, "with the bronze of battle on his brow"! I almost fancied myself such a young hero, and thought to display the "bronze of battle" which I had acquired at Maharajpore to the admiring eyes of comrades and the regimental womankind!

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I found my regiment at Barrackpore, a station fifteen miles from Calcutta, to which it had moved whilst I was absent from it. I had not rejoined long when my friend Chambers vacated the Interpretership, and I was appointed his successor. But by this time my military zeal refused to be satisfied by anything short of the Adjutancy, which, as well as the Interpretership, was soon to be vacant. My only dangerous rival for the Adjutancy had lately, by the kind prescience of Spottiswoode, now Military Secretary to the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, been removed from the regiment to a civil appointment. In the course of 1844 I attained the object of my ambition, and became Adjutant of my regiment.

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But in the meantime, whilst I held the appointment of Interpreter and Quarter-master, an incident had occurred which pretty well sickened me of service in a Sepoy regiment. An order had issued

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from head-quarters directing that haversacks and slings for the great-coats should in future form a part of every Sepoy's equipment. As Quarter-master it was my province and duty, under the Commanding Officer's orders, to make provision for these articles, which come under the head of what are called "Half-mountings," and are paid for by stoppages from the men's pay. Soldiers, whatever their colour, are always jealous of anything which affects their pay. When pay-day came round, the companies were paraded as usual in undress to receive their pay. The new articles were distributed to them, and the price duly recovered. This produced a good deal of muttered grumbling amongst the men, and when the companies had been dismissed to the lines, the men got together in groups, and pretended to think that the new articles had been forced upon them by the whim of their new Quarter-master, and not in obedience to an Army order. I and the other officers on duty ordered the groups to disperse, and, when they disobeyed, made prisoners of those who appeared to be the ringleaders, and confined them in the Quarter-guard close at hand. As the disorder continued, I reported what was passing to the Colonel. Our mess dinner was just over, and the Colonel was smoking his second hookah. With some difficulty I persuaded him to accompany me to the lines (as the barracks of Native regiments are called in India) and exert his authority to stop the disorderly proceedings of the men. In a previous note I have mentioned that the Colonel had a certain personal influence with the men in addition to his authority as Commanding Officer; and he now, in a half-authoritative, half-jocular manner, harangued some of the groups, and bade them disperse quietly, and the prisoners should be released! Eventually the men did disperse, but in the meantime I had been struck by a stone thrown in the dusk by some

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mutinous scoundrel, and I was indignant to see what was nothing short of mutiny treated with such levity. In this undignified way was order at length restored. From mistaken *esprit de corps* we officers, most of us quite young, agreed to observe silence as to what had occurred, so as not to disgrace the character of the regiment. As far as I remember, the obnoxious articles were never brought into regular use until an officer of a different stamp took command of the regiment. From that day a deep distrust of the Sepoys took possession of me. My previous enthusiasm for them vanished, and I regarded with aversion the thought that my life was to be spent with men whom I now saw to be ready to mutiny for a trivial cause, and who had shown that they held their officers in no real respect or affection.

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But with time, and partly from willingness to accept as sincere the expressions of repentance and regret of which I became the recipient, I gradually recovered some part of my former contentment and enthusiasm, and determined to devote myself, in my new office of Adjutant, to improving discipline, and to gaining for the 21st the character of being the smartest regiment in the Army. My then Commanding Officer I knew to be an almost "negligible quantity," for indeed all he asked was not to be troubled, so that for the next three or four years I had an almost free hand. He was followed in the command by a most estimable officer, who, without concerning himself personally, approved and confirmed everything I did; and again by a man of altogether different stamp, who took the task I had set myself upon his own shoulders, and worked at it with an energy as great as my own. The final result was that in 1850, when the 21st arrived in the Punjab, it had gained the character I had desired

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for it, and was known for its discipline and smartness. So much was this the case, that I felt a real pang when, in 1850, I voluntarily separated myself from it.

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It is gratifying to add that the 21st fully maintained the character, which it had gradually acquired whilst I was connected with it, during the six or seven years that followed, and that when the great Sepoy Mutiny broke out in 1857 it was the only Native regiment, out of the five then stationed at Peshawar, which General Sir Sydney Cotton and his able advisers, Herbert Edwardes and John Nicholson, did not think it necessary to disarm. On the contrary, it was believed by them to be so free from the taint of mutiny that it retained its arms during the whole of that trying period, doing much useful service in aid of the British regiments of the garrison. At the reorganization of the Native Army at the end of the Mutiny, it became the First Native Infantry of the Bengal Army, all the twenty regiments originally senior to it having mutinied or been disbanded. At the date I write, 1904, my old regiment still retains its place at the head of the Native Army of Bengal. The regiment was perilously near becoming at one time what Sir Charles Napier condemned, an "Adjutant's regiment"; but it was saved from that fate by falling—as has been told—late in my connexion with it—under the command of a most capable officer, the late Major-General Henry Milne.

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To so enthusiastic a soldier as I was at the period to which the foregoing notes relate, it was, of course, very galling that the distance at which my regiment lay from the scene of action deprived it of the chance of taking part in the great battles 1845–9 which preceded the annexation of the Punjab. Sir Jasper Nicolls had been succeeded as Commander-in-Chief

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by Lord (then Sir Hugh) Gough, to whom I was unrecommended, and, of course, unknown. All my applications, and they were many, to be appointed to some post—I cared not what—with the fighting troops were unsuccessful. The science of electricity was then in its early infancy; but reading that the Sikhs made very free use of mines in defending their camps and positions, I made myself sufficiently master of the elements of the science to frame a plan for exploding their mines prematurely by means of an electric battery. This plan I forwarded to Army Head-quarters, in the hope that I might at least be sent for to explain and experimentalize. I daresay my plan was very crude, and that it was quite justly pooh-poohed by the Army chiefs, though supported by Henry Lawrence, who was then at the beginning of his distinguished career, and, during the later portion of the first Sikh war (1845–6), accompanied Lord Gough as his political adviser. At any rate I got nothing but cold thanks for my suggestion at the time, though later I think it did me good service, as will be related in a future note. That I could not get to the fighting army was, of course, what is called "the fortune of war," and it is a fortune of which I have had my full share. The only consolation is that there is often more personal danger to the soldier in a trifling skirmish, than in an important battle for which a medal is given: and I have no reason to complain that I have been ill-used in the matter of the smaller risks of service.

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It was at the period to which these last notes relate that I contributed to *Fraser's Magazine* a biographical notice of my late General, Sir J. H. Littler. His kindness to me in the Gwalior campaign, and after, had deserved my gratitude; and the Sutlej campaign, in which he again held an im-

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portant command, had brought his name to the front for the second time. From this time forward I became a not infrequent contributor of newspaper articles connected with the profession, but always under the strictest anonymity—a very necessary precaution then, though even admirals and generals are not now so particular in concealing their identity. I perhaps owed it to the pleasure which my notice of him in *Fraser* gave to the General, that a year or two afterwards, when he was acting as Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, he offered me a handsomely-paid appointment in what was known as the Thuggee (a civil) department. I was however much too devoted to soldiering to hesitate for a moment about declining it. My friends laughed, but I kept my own counsel. What should I now be if I had accepted?

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Some of the preceding notes will have given the impression that I felt myself peculiarly unfortunate in having been appointed to the 21st Native Infantry. On further reflection, however, I am inclined to think that the 21st was fairly representative of the Native Infantry regiments of the day. A certain impetus had no doubt been recently given to the Native Army by the Afghan expedition of 1839, and the subsequent occupation of Afghanistan; but its effects, if any, were confined to what was numerically a very small proportion of the army, and had not permeated the army generally. The general peace of India had hardly been broken since the Mahratta wars of the early part of the century; and the effect of such a long period of peace upon a local army organized in all its parts on a system of strict seniority, was what might be expected. With few exceptions the whole army had drifted into a state of what I am tempted to call senile somnolence. In many of the Bengal regiments

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the senior Captains were of thirty years' service and upwards. Few regiments were without three or four brevet Captains, that is to say, Lieutenants of fifteen years' service or more. When the very unexacting nature of the duties these mature officers were required to perform is considered, it is hardly to be wondered at if interest and energy had become extinct. The seniority system under which the English officers rose to higher rank was imitated in the Native ranks. Almost as a matter of course the senior sepoy became corporal; the senior corporal, sergeant; the senior sergeant, Native officer. As a body the Native officers were in the last stage of mental and bodily feebleness. I do not wish to speak unkindly of the service in which I passed my early military life; but I fear that if the history of the Bengal Native Army for the years between 1820 and 1857 could be faithfully written, it would be found that the military qualities which had made the Native Army a potent instrument in the Anglicization of India had sadly deteriorated. I do not forget how Nott praised his Native regiments at Kandahar, or how well Sale's Native troops behaved at Jellalabad: but how about the Native regiments with Elphinstone at Kabul in 1840–1, or under Wild in the Khyber Pass? or with Lord Gough in some of his sternly contested battles? It is my belief that just as such a cataclysm as the French Revolution was a necessity in its day to put an end to abuses which nothing less drastic could cure, so such a cataclysm as the Indian Mutiny of 1857 was absolutely necessary to the awakening and complete regeneration of the Native Army. Had the Mutiny not taken place, we should not now be able to feel that neither internal nor external foes can be a danger whilst we possess a Native Army so different from that which we possessed sixty years ago.

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CHAPTER III

The Punjab Frontier Force

1850–5

THE name of Sir Henry Lawrence has already been mentioned in these notes. It was through him that my crude idea of bringing electric science to the aid of our troops during the Sikh invasion of 1845 had been submitted to the Commander-in-Chief. Nothing came of my proposal at the time, but Sir Henry had apparently noted with approval that a young officer, in his desire to get to the front, had shown a zeal and intelligence somewhat beyond the ordinary. Accordingly, when casting about, five years later, for officers for the newly-raised Punjab Frontier Force, Sir Henry remembered me, and wrote me a letter offering to recommend me for employment in it. I was Adjutant of my regiment at the time, and, I think I may say, was trusted and valued by an excellent commanding officer, the late Major-General H. Milne; but I had long felt that there was a latent discontent in the Native Army, and that our authority over the Sepoys rested on a very hollow basis. I was therefore glad of the opportunity of dissociating myself from men whom I no longer implicitly trusted, and unhesitatingly accepted Sir Henry's offer. My regiment marched in the winter of 1849–50 from Central India to Wuzeerabad in the Punjab, and on passing through Lahore I called upon Sir Henry Lawrence to thank him for his offer, and to learn what I could of the nature of my future employment. Sir Henry received me with the affability for which he was

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noted, talked about the Force I was about to join, and of the good service one of the regiments of it had already done under Sir Colin Campbell.[1] Sir Henry Lawrence had been so much before the public for the last four or five years, that I looked at him with great interest. His portraits are so well known that I need not attempt to describe his appearance, further than to say, that there was a worn look about his face which was almost affecting, and bespoke unmistakably the anxieties he had gone through since he became the Governor-General's Agent on the north-west frontier four or five years before. His cares had not been lessened by his being called to inaugurate the British rule over a martial race like the Sikhs, so lately in arms against us, and still smarting under the consciousness of defeat and the loss of independence. It was with no slight pride, I remember, that I felt, after my interview with Sir Henry, that I was about to become a humble sharer in the work of reconciling this manly and interesting race to the new order of things.

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John Lawrence, Sir Henry's brother, whom I also saw on this occasion, was of a totally different and robuster type. Large and burly, he was working at a table covered with papers, and received me in his shirt-sleeves. I was bidden to luncheon, and found myself at table with Mrs. John Lawrence, a charming specimen, I thought, of the matronly and motherly English lady. Amongst others at table was Hodson, afterwards the daring cavalry officer, organizer and leader of "Hodson's Horse," so famous in the later days of the Mutiny. He was then an unknown subaltern, showing by his shaven head that he had lately recovered from illness, but evidently in favour with the Lawrences. He was employed by them, as it seemed to me, as a sort of

[1] The late Lord Clyde.

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confidential aide-de-camp or military secretary. One more of the *convives* at that luncheon I may mention. He was a son of Dr. Arnold, of Rugby, and I remembered him as a little boy in my school-days at Rugby. He was now a subaltern in one of the Sepoy regiments, and I judged him to have been taken in hand by the Lawrences for his father's sake. He left the service early, and was chiefly known in India as the author of a novel, written from his Indian experiences, and conveying an unpleasing impression of Indian life and society. I imagine that the story had little success, and it certainly was not looked upon with favour by his former comrades.

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The leave-taking with the 21st two months later, when I found myself gazetted as acting second in command of the 2nd Punjab Infantry, was a very sorrowful affair on both sides. I was the best of friends with all my brother officers and had long lived down any unpopularity I once had with the men. My commanding officer was most unwilling that I should leave the regiment, and did all he could to persuade me to decline Sir Henry Lawrence's offer. I, however, was not to be persuaded, and, escorted for the first mile out of the Wuzeerabad cantonments by half the regiment—many of the men in tears, as I was almost myself—started on my solitary journey of twenty-five marches to Kohat on the Peshawar frontier.

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I need not dwell upon this journey, which took me through a part of the Punjab almost unknown at that time, but which later on I found was a valuable recruiting ground for those excellent soldiers known as "Punjabee Mohammedans." The Punjabee Mohammedans are the descendants of an earlier race forcibly converted to Mohammedanism

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in the days of the great Western invasions. They form an important part of the population of the Punjab, but their particular country (the Sindh Sagur Doab) lies between the Jhelum and the Indus, and I have since often visited it both in quest of recruits and in pursuit of that fine animal, the *ooriyal*, or wild sheep, a denizen of the low hills and ravines of that part of the Punjab and also of the Trans-Indus hills. I entered the Trans-Indus country, which was to be my home for many subsequent years, at Kalabagh on the great river. The Indus here, and for its upper course generally, is confined within rocky banks, and the current is consequently extremely rapid and makes navigation by the cumbrous river craft—little altered since the time of Alexander and Nearchus—both difficult and dangerous. The solitude of my journey was broken at Kalabagh by the acquaintance I made of a young fellow, McCarthy by name, whom I found living in a small house overlooking the Indus, and who invited me to halt for a day and exchange the heat of a tent in May for the comparative coolness of his modest dwelling. McCarthy was a favourable specimen of the adventurous young Anglo-Saxon, and filled a subordinate appointment in the Salt Preventive[1] Service. He was a most fearless swimmer, and every morning performed the feat of swimming from one bank to the other of the icy-cold and rapid river. I was not swimmer enough to emulate McCarthy's feat, and was contented with a less ambitious swim. Poor McCarthy! I never saw him again, as he was shortly removed to—let us hope—a less forlorn station; but his hospitality and the manly simplicity of his nature has always left a pleasant recollection on my mind.

[1] Until 1878 the Salt Tax varied in different parts of India; and it was therefore necessary to maintain a Preventive Staff to suppress smuggling.

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Three more marches took me to my destination, Kohat, and I reported myself to Captain Johnston, the Commandant of the 2nd Punjab Infantry, as his new second in command. To my surprise, and perhaps a little to my alarm, I found that Captain Johnston was leaving Kohat the same evening for a long period of leave, and that I had fallen into the acting command of a regiment the very day I joined the Frontier Force!

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I leave my personal recollections for a moment to recall the early history of the Punjab Frontier Force, and to trace the circumstances under which it grew up to be quite distinct from and unsympathetic with the mutinous Bengal Army, and able to render our cause most efficient aid in the great Mutiny of 1857.

In 1849, after Gough's decisive victory of Goojerat and the surrender of the remains of the Sikh Army to General Gilbert at Rawal-Pindee, Lord Dalhousie declared the Punjab henceforth a part of the British Empire. The annexation carried with it the necessity of providing additional troops for the new province, and for its much exposed north-western frontier. This frontier, roughly some 600 miles in length, marked the dividing line between India and the various independent tribes inhabiting the mountainous region between India and Afghanistan. The tribes inhabiting this region are known under the various names of Afreedees, Wuzeerees, Orukzyes, etc., and are all zealous Mohammedans. When not fighting among themselves they were accustomed to regard as their legitimate prey the more peaceful dwellers of the plains on our side of the border. The Sikhs knew them, as well as the Pushtoo-speaking tribes within our border, under the generic name of "Pathans," and the name stood with them for the embodiment of all that was most unruly and savage.

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When from time to time Pathan rebels or robbers fell into their hands, they treated them with a savagery equal to their own. One of the first duties of the more humane successors of the Sikhs was to hold the frontier in such a way as to afford real protection to our subjects against raiders from beyond the border. It was on these grounds that Sir Henry Lawrence counselled the formation of what has since been known as the "Punjab Frontier Force."

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The strength of the new Force was originally fixed at three batteries of mountain guns, five regiments of cavalry and five of infantry; but it was subsequently increased by the incorporation with it of four existing Sikh infantry regiments of a former addition to the Army; of a regiment of mixed nationalities raised by Sir Charles Napier after the conquest of Scinde, under the name of the "Scinde Camel Corps," and of a regiment of Goorkahs. The above, with the Corps of Guides, consisting of both cavalry and infantry, which was henceforth ranked with the Force, formed a total of 11,000 or 12,000 men. The three artillery batteries had mule equipment in view of the nature of their probable service; the five regiments of cavalry were raised on the lines of the then existing Irregular Cavalry, which had frequently done good service from the time of the Mahratta wars; the Infantry regiments were also raised on the "Irregular" system, which allotted only three British officers to each regiment.

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The Guide Corps mentioned in the last note afforded an excellent model both for the Cavalry and Infantry of the Force. It had been raised some years previously by Captain H. B. Lumsden,[1] and had already done excellent service on the frontier. Of course it was natural and politic that the new

[1] The late General Sir H. B. Lumsden, K.C.S.I., C.B.

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troops should be raised from the population of the new province, instead of having resort to the old recruiting grounds of the Native Army, namely, Oude, Behar, and North-west India. Further, to preserve a distinctly separate character for the new body of troops, Lord Dalhousie was persuaded by Sir Henry Lawrence to place them under the direct control of the Punjab Government, instead of allowing them to be merged in the regular Bengal Army by adding them to the Commander-in-Chief's existing command. Sir Henry, it is well known, had a wonderful prescience of the danger to be apprehended from the shallow loyalty of the Bengal Sepoys, and foretold the Mutiny of 1857 long before it came about.

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An excellent nucleus for the new Force existed in the disbanded veterans of the Sikh Army, many of whom desired nothing better than to take service under their conquerors. The Sikh and Mohammedan population of the new province furnished a further ample supply of willing recruits; nor were "Pathan" recruits from either side of the border excluded.

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The officers of the new Force were, in the first instance, appointed by Lord Dalhousie in the ordinary exercise of his patronage. Of course some square men were put into round holes, but these were gradually eliminated, or left the Force in dissatisfaction at the rough nature of the service; and the effect was that seven years later, when the great Sepoy Mutiny arrived, the Force was officered by perhaps as good men as the army could produce. The names of John Coke, "Sam" Browne, Wilde, Daly, Sladen, Keyes, McQueen and many others are all of the pre-Mutiny or Mutiny period, and require no praise from me. The appointment of Brigadier Commanding the Force was given in the first instance to a very capable officer, the late General

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J. S. Hodgson. On his retirement some years later the command of the Force passed to a most distinguished officer, the late Field-Marshal Sir Neville Chamberlain.

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Under Chamberlain's chivalrous leading, and high sense of duty to Queen and Country, the Force soon gained reputation as an unusually efficient body of native troops. Chamberlain's assumption of the command was shortly followed by an extremely successful punitive expedition into the country of the Mahsud Wuzeerees, a tribe which has been a disturber of the peace of the frontier from the date of annexation down to the year in which I write, 1904. The expedition, which was composed entirely of the frontier troops, was vigorously opposed; but Chamberlain's movements were so deliberate, and so well calculated, that after a prolonged stay in their country, the Wuzeerees had to confess themselves beaten at all points, and unable to resist our arms. This, and other expeditions of a less important character, educated the troops to the peculiarities of hill warfare, and gave them confidence in themselves, and an intense respect for and confidence in their leader. Neville Chamberlain attached but small importance to the niceties of parade drill, but he demanded constant practice in the open country, and introduced the excellent custom, which was continued as long as I remained in the Force, of requiring the infantry regiments to form camp in the hills nearest their stations for a fortnight in every year, and on the mountain side to practise the common requirements of real warfare. The good effects of this sensible practice have again and again been experienced.

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As only three British officers were in the first instance allotted to each regiment of the Force, it was

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of the first importance that the Native officers who were to command the troops and companies should be of a different stamp from the effete and useless Subadars and Jemadars of the Bengal Army. The necessity soon produced what was required, and the good quality and efficiency of the native officers became a marked feature of the Force. They commanded their troops and companies as well in the field as in quarters, and their opinion and advice were constantly asked by their commanding officers on all occasions of difficulty. A native officer of the 4th Punjab Infantry obtained the high honour of being mentioned by name in Lord Clyde's official dispatch of the relief of Lucknow; and a feat of arms was performed in 1860 on the Dera Ismail frontier by Ressaldar Saadat Khan, of the 5th Punjab Cavalry, than which nothing could have been more gallant and successful, and which met with the highest commendation from the Viceroy of India.

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The rough service upon which the Force was employed, the remoteness of the frontier stations, and the absence of the enervating influences of long peace service, all tended to improve the quality both of officers and men. For some years ladies were forbidden at the frontier stations, and the absence of society threw the officers back upon their professional duties. Field sports, tent pegging, and polo took the place of the balls and entertainments of more civilized parts. The officers of the Force were pitied by their comrades at the pleasanter stations of the army; but they in turn vaunted the superior military qualities of their men, and prided themselves on being the watch-dogs of the frontier.

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It is a pleasure to me, who am almost the only survivor (1904) of the original race of Punjab Fron-

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tier Force officers, to write these few lines explanatory of the origin and characteristics of a Force in the ranks of which I served for twenty happy years.

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Before I resume my personal recollection, perhaps it will make these notes more intelligible to the general reader if I briefly describe the frontier of which the Punjab Frontier Force was the appointed guardian during the years of my connexion with it.

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What is generally known as the "Punjab frontier" begins on the south, where the frontier of Scinde ends, namely, from the neighbourhood of Kusmore, a village which will be found in the map at the end of the volume. From this point a level plain, from twenty to fifty miles in width, and almost desert in character, extends northward, until it reaches, a little above the latitude of Dera Ismail Khan, a range of low hills running east and west, and ending, to the east, near the Indus. This desert plain between Scinde and Dera Ismail Khan was called by the Sikhs "the Derajât," meaning "the encampments" —why so called I will not stop to explain. The Derajât is bounded on the east by the river Indus, and on the west by a well-defined range of low hills, marking the eastern limit of the maze of mountains which forms a huge buffer between India and Afghanistan. At the period to which these notes refer, the Derajât contained three nearly equidistant military stations, namely, Rajanpore on the south, Dera Ghazee Khan in the middle, and Dera Ismail Khan in the north. Parallel to the range of low hills which marks the western frontier, and at an average distance of four or five miles from it, we constructed, in the early days of annexation, a line of small square mud forts about twelve miles apart, capable of sheltering mixed garrisons of varying strength both cavalry and infantry. Systematic patrolling between these

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forts secured that any incursion of the hill tribes was promptly noticed and repelled; or that, if the posts were too weak to repel it, information was quickly conveyed to the military station in the rear.

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Proceeding northward, and crossing the low east-and-west range of hills above mentioned by the Paizoo Pass, we come to the open and fertile valleys of Murwut and Bunnoo. At the northern end of these two valleys is the strong fort of Dhuleepgurh, built by Herbert Edwardes in the year preceding Moolraj's rebellion (1848), with a view to control the ill-disposed population of the Bunnoo valley, and the turbulent and powerful tribe of Wuzeerees, at the other side of the border. The Bunnoo frontier was not defended by a regular sequence of forts like the Derajât, but by posts of similar construction, placed at points of greatest danger. From the frontier of Scinde to Bunnoo the direction of the frontier has been nearly due north and south: but from Bunnoo it takes a north-easterly direction towards Kohat. At this part of the frontier our subjects, the Khuttucks, being both loyal and warlike, a continuance of the Derajât system of defence by a line of forts was unnecessary. A strong fort at Bahadurkheyl, a vulnerable spot, and the warlike following of the loyal Khuttuck chief, Khan Mahomed Khan, sufficed to keep the frontier free from serious incursion by the Wuzeerees and others. The garrison of Kohat, again, was always maintained at adequate strength to support Khan Mahomed Khan in case of need, and to protect our loyal subjects of the Kohat and its dependent valleys from attack by marauding Orukzyes or Afreedees.

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The continuity of the frontier is broken at Kohat by an inconvenient wedge of independent Afreedee territory, the road through which has always been

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a source of trouble. Otherwise the frontier runs due north from Kohat to Peshawar. A little north of Peshawar it makes a great circular bend to the east till it meets the Indus some miles north of Attock. The frontier of the Peshawar Valley is cared for by the strong garrison we have always maintained at Peshawar; but the north-eastern portion of the valley, which is known as Eusufzye, is the peculiar charge of the Corps of Guides attached to the Punjab Frontier Force, with its headquarters at Fort Murdan. The independent tribes against which the Peshawar Valley has to be guarded are the Afreedees of the Khyber and Kohat Passes to the west, the Swatees and the war-like clans of Bonair to the north and north-east.

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From the neighbourhood of Attock the frontier follows the course of the Indus northward for about thirty miles, and then takes a north-easterly direction and encloses the Hazara district until it joins the Kashmir frontier in the neighbourhood of Khagan. The military station of Hazara is Abbottabad, which is also the headquarters of the Punjab Frontier Force, and the residence of the brigadier-general commanding. The total length of the frontier from Scinde to Kashmir may be taken at about 600 miles.

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The early days of my service with the Frontier Force were not altogether happy. I had come from one of the smartest regiments of the Sepoy Army of that day, and prided myself on having largely contributed to make it what it was. The change from the smooth and faultlessly dressed Hindoostanee to the rougher and as yet un-uniformed Sikh and Pathan was distasteful to me. Instead of the perfection I had left, everything had to be originated and brought into shape. Nor had I a free hand to do what I thought proper. I was only an acting commandant, and had to be cautious that any changes I desired to

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make were such as Captain Johnston would approve. The Adjutant of the regiment was disappointed that the temporary command of the regiment had not devolved upon him instead of upon me, an outsider. If I proposed any deviation from the existing inchoate state of things I was constantly met by the objection that Captain Johnston would not like it. We were living, too, at Kohat in a very rough fashion. All the English officers, civil as well as military, were crowded up in a small native garden-house; for prudence forbade us, in the near neighbourhood of the fanatical and hostile Afreedee tribe, to pitch our tents in the more convenient parts of the cantonment. But all these causes of dissatisfaction gradually disappeared as I became interested in my new duties and better acquainted with the novel material of which the regiment was composed. This material it was my office to develop, and render serviceable to the State. So I soon became an enthusiastic frontier officer, just as I had been an enthusiastic adjutant of a regular Sepoy regiment.

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I had not been more than four or five months with the 2nd Punjab Infantry, when a party of the Wuzeeree tribe above mentioned invaded our frontier at a point about thirty miles from Kohat, and plundered some valuable salt mines which we had inherited from the late Sikh Government. The invasion necessitated a force, of which my regiment formed a unit, being hurried out from Kohat to repel the invaders. When this had been effected, it was thought expedient, in view of eventualities, to leave an entrenched post of about 1,000 men at Nurree in the country of the Khuttuck tribe, where it would be in a position to safeguard the salt mines, and to secure that part of the frontier from invasion. I was placed in command of this post, which was

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to consist of two mountain guns, some companies of my own regiment, and some irregular frontier levies, horse and foot, furnished by the civil authorities of Kohat and Bunnoo. If the post required support, I was to look for it to Bunnoo. The fort of Bunnoo, it may be remembered, had been built by Herbert Edwardes during the last year of our anomalous relations with the Sikh Government, 1847–8. It was intended to bridle the truculent population of the fertile valley of Bunnoo; and so effectually did it answer that purpose, that, on the outbreak of the revolt at Mooltan, which brought about the second Sikh war, Edwardes was able to leave the valley with only a slender garrison, whilst he took to Mooltan the bulk of the troops with which he had built the fort. How he successfully fought the rebel Moolraj, and prepared the way for the formal siege of Mooltan by General Whish, he has related in his *Two Years on the Punjab Frontier*. After the annexation of the Punjab, Sir Henry Lawrence selected Major Reynell Taylor to take military and political charge of this remote and exposed district, and he it was who was to support me, if need should be, in my rather forlorn post at Nurree.

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I cannot mention Reynell Taylor's name for the first time without recording the affectionate respect in which he was held by the frontier officers of the period. He was the Bayard of the frontier, "*sans peur et sans reproche.*" He was an accomplished swordsman, though his handsome face bore upon it the scar of a sabre wound received at the battle of Moodkee. Sir Henry Lawrence held him in high esteem, as was shown by his appointing him to the charge of the most exposed and unruly district on the frontier. His simple piety and dignity, his justice and conciliatory bearing, had given him

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great influence with the people; whilst the firmness with which he maintained the peace of the border won him the respect of the Wuzeerees, and other independent tribes. Reynell Taylor's skill as a swordsman stood him in remarkable stead a few years later. He accompanied as political officer the expedition against the Mahsud Wuzeerees of which mention has been made in a previous note, and was reconnoitring in advance of the troops with four or five mounted orderlies when he was suddenly attacked from behind a rock by three Wuzeeree swordsmen. The assault was so sudden and fierce that five horses—Taylor's among the number—were wounded before Taylor could engage and cut down one man and shoot another with his revolver, the third being disposed of by his men. On the frontier it was generally believed that all three Wuzeerees were disposed of by Taylor, who, however, could rarely be brought to speak of an affair so much to his credit.

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I passed the next nine months in the command of this Nurree post. I was the only European, officer or man, and spent my time, not on the whole unpleasantly, in exploring a then unknown country, and in making friends, according to my instructions, with the people of the valley. I soon acquired a colloquial knowledge of the language they spoke—Pushtoo or Afghanee—and the idea then occurred to me of constructing a grammar of the language, a task never seriously attempted before. In this I eventually succeeded, and published it two years later in Calcutta. It was, of course, very elementary and unpretending, but was found useful by my comrades of the Force, and gained me credit with the Punjab Government and with my chiefs, General Hodgson and Neville Chamberlain. The latter, in subsequent years, in his tours of inspection,

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often used me as his confidential interpreter where secrecy was desirable. But what has always been the best reward for the trouble the preparation of the grammar cost me, was the confidence it gained for me with all Pushtoo-speaking people. The simple Pathans of the Nurree Valley looked upon me with great respect—I might almost say affection—because I could speak with them in their own language. They often sought my advice in their tribal and domestic affairs, and I have even been consulted by them in such delicate matters as their love affairs! In time my name came to be known throughout the Force and frontier for my acquaintance with Pushtoo, a fact of which I often found the benefit in my intercourse with the frontier tribesmen, or when associated with the other regiments of the Force on service or in the course of duty.

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Quite recently, and when the recollection of my grammar had almost passed from my mind, I received a letter from the publishers, Messrs. Thacker, Spink and Co., of Calcutta, asking to be allowed to reprint it. I consented, and the reprint has since appeared. In the preface to the reprint I thought well to insert a very favourable notice of my grammar which I found in an "Essay on the Pushtoo or Afghanee Language," contributed by the late Lord Strangford in 1863, to the Asiatic Society's Journal for that year. I may be excused for copying it here.

"The first Pushtoo Grammar written in English, and containing more than a mere outline of the rules of the language, is the useful and unpretending little work of Colonel Vaughan, published in Calcutta in 1854, and followed in 1855 by a volume containing an English-Pushtoo Vocabulary. This work is entirely practical, and does not meddle with philology or grammatical theory; its use, therefore,

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is less for the comparative philologist or the ambitious student of Afghan literature than for the soldier or the man of business desirous of obtaining a knowledge of the elementary rules and common words of the language by a simple and easy method. Its accuracy, though not unimpeachable, is quite sufficient for the ordinary purposes of business, or the rough and ready wants of the officer; and it only requires more idiomatic phrases and dialogues to be pronounced by far the most practically useful, if not the most theoretically perfect, of existing Afghan Grammars."

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One of the more recent occasions on which I have found a knowledge of Pushtoo valuable, was in the Afghan war, 1879–81, when, as Special Correspondent of the *Times*, I had several interviews—by permission of course—with the Ameer Yakub Khan, both before and after his resignation of the Ameership; and our conversations, which were carried on in Pushtoo, were, of course, interesting. During our occupation of Kabul in the winter of 1880–81 I had the opportunity of making acquaintance with many of the best known Afghan Chiefs and Sirdars, and of paying visits at their houses. This was a pleasant relief from the monotony of our long stay at Kabul. On these occasions I was generally accompanied by Colonel Stewart, of the Guide Corps, who spoke Persian whilst I conversed in the humbler Pushtoo. The latter is the domestic language, so to say, of Afghanistan, Persian that of the higher classes and of the Court. Finally, I renewed my practice of the language in London in 1902, in conversations at Hampton Court and elsewhere, with the officers and men of the Indian contingent.

Many years after the publication of my grammar, when I was commanding at Dera Ismail Khan, I

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was called upon by two gentlemen, who announced themselves as missionaries in connexion with one of the great English societies. Their desire was to do missionary work among the Afghans, and they thought to reach Afghanistan by traversing the intricate maze of mountains which separates India from Afghanistan, and is the home of the Afreedees, Wuzeerees, and other independent tribes with which we, on the frontier, were always more or less at war. Both the gentlemen were quite ready to cross the frontier and set to work at once to preach to the wild tribes between our frontier and Afghanistan, but had been recommended at Lahore to see me first, and obtain some advice as to the best and quickest way of learning Pushtoo. I gladly gave them the necessary advice, but warned them that my orders would not permit me to let them cross the frontier. It was all but certain that any European crossing the frontier would be incontinently murdered, with grave consequences to the Government. The two gentlemen in question were Dr. French, subsequently the respected bishop of Lahore, and Dr. Bruce, whom I last heard of as doing excellent missionary work at Ispahan. They were quite amenable to what I told them, and reconciled themselves to the necessity of seeking admission to Afghanistan by a less hazardous route than that through the fanatical tribes of the frontier.

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My special employment in the Khuttuck country lasted for about a year. At the end of that time I was appointed Commandant of the 5th Infantry of the Frontier Force, and joined it at Dera Ghazee Khan, in the lower Trans-Indus country.

For any officer fond of his profession, in good health, and not averse to the simple and rough life of the frontier, I can conceive nothing more desirable

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than, in his early thirties, to command a Punjab Frontier regiment. By this time I had completely shaken off the distaste with which I—lately the zealous Adjutant of a smart regiment of Sepoys of the type of the old Bengal Infantry—had at first regarded the then rough, if serviceable, look of the newly raised frontier regiments. I had talked much at Kohat with John Coke,[1] whom we jokingly called the Father of the Force, and who, with his newly raised regiment, composed chiefly of Pathans, had won the special approbation of Sir Charles Napier, when he forced, or attempted to force, the Kohat Pass in 1849. I had assimilated many of Coke's ideas, and seen how necessary it was to clothe and drill soldiers with an eye to the work they have to perform. The unfitness of pedantically dressed and drilled men to do effective work in the rough stony hills of the frontier had come home to me. Having seen something of our probable foes, the Afreedees, Wuzeerees, etc., I determined that it should be my aim to make the men I commanded fit, in every way, to meet them on their own ground. An appeal to the records of my regiment will show how far I succeeded.

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The 5th Punjab Infantry had been embodied for some months when I assumed the command. I was aware that the progress it had made in efficiency was not satisfactory to Brigadier Hodgson, then commanding the Force. The regiment, as I first saw it, was certainly far from coming up to an ideal frontier regiment. Its composition was fair, but the different classes of which it was composed were mixed up in the ranks, every class being represented in the same company. John Coke—my adviser and teacher, whilst I was absorbing new ideas on professional matters, and forgetting the pedantry of

[1] The late General Sir John Coke, K.C.B.

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old days—was strong on the subject of what are called "class" companies. His rather homely argument was that it was cruel to put the Sikh, who reverenced the cow, side by side in the ranks with the Mohammedan who had probably just partaken of its flesh; or to put the Mohammedan, who abhorred the pig, in touch with the Sikh, who is not forbidden the flesh of the unclean animal—at least when in a wild state. One of the earliest reforms I introduced was, to form the regiment in class companies, and the Fifth eventually stood as follows:—

2	Companies	Sikhs,
2	,,	Punjab Mohammedans,
2	,,	Pathans,
1	,,	Dogras,
1	,,	Mixed.

The soldierly qualities of the Sikhs are now so well known as not to need recital. Brave, and not resenting the strictest discipline, they are the backbone of a frontier regiment. Their compatriots, the Punjab Mohammedans, have many qualities in common with the Sikhs. The Dogras from the foot-hills of the Himalayas represent the best fighting class of Hindoos, with a minimum of caste prejudices. The Pathans, as they are generically called in the Punjab, though they never describe themselves under that designation, are born fighters, and, from whichever side of the border they come are mostly mountaineers, and particularly adapted for the frontier service. Commanded and led by company officers of their own class, neither Sikhs, Punjabees, Dogras or Pathans ever failed me during the twenty years which I served at their head.

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The four years which followed my appointment to command the Fifth were devoted to the grateful task of making my regiment thoroughly efficient

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for the duties of the frontier—the first year at Dera Ghazee Khan, the last three at Bunnoo. The pains I took were appreciated by my Brigadier, and year by year he recorded his approval at his annual inspections. I have in a previous note explained how practical was the system of drill and training which came to be adopted in the Force. It was not the training laid down in drill books, but it was the training which an experience, gradually gained in actual hill warfare, told commanding officers (who were not too old, or too much fettered by red tape ideas to learn) was the most suitable for the wants of our regiments. When many years later the Franco-Prussian war came, and the world —surprised by the great superiority of the German troops—inquired how it was brought about, we on the frontier smiled to find how, by the use of a little common sense and freedom from red tape, we had anticipated a great deal of what was best in the German system of training.

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In further illustration of what has been said of the practical nature of our drills and exercises, I may say that they were as often as not carried on either on the mountain-side or on the rough and stony ground at the foot of the frontier hills. One of our favourite exercises was to pit one wing of the regiment against the other in the attack and defence of the varying positions which the country near our stations afforded. Going up a hill in face of a supposed enemy was another very favourite practice, and retiring down a hill in face of an enemy another. If these operations were not performed to the commanding officer's approval the mistakes were pointed out, and the practice repeated. It is pleasant to remember the interest which all ranks used to take in these practices, and how expert the Native officers and men became at them. The

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proof of the value of these exercises was seen in the many great and small campaigns in which our regiments have from time to time been engaged.

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The Frontier Force, though outside the control of the Commander-in-Chief, was yet held to be subject to the Articles of War for Native troops. But in the earlier days we thought little of maintaining discipline by means of Courts-Martial, and used quite an autocratic power in dealing with offences. Most of us I think had a wholesome dread of assimilating our practices too slavishly to those of the Bengal Native Army ; and our prescience was not at fault, for it was not many years before the great Sepoy Mutiny occurred, and our regiments were fighting at Delhi and Lucknow against the same army whose ways we had declined too rigidly to follow. But the exercise of harsh, autocratic authority on the part of commanding officers soon ceased in the Force. Discipline once established, personal influence was found sufficient to maintain it, and enabled us to dispense alike with high-handed punishments and Articles of War.

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" Khaki," or " Khakee," as I should spell it, which has now apparently become our national fighting colour, owes its origin to the Punjab Frontier Force. That distinguished Frontier officer, the late General Sir Henry Lumsden, first adopted it when he raised the well known Guide Corps in 1846. He chose it because no colour assimilates so well with the general colour of the plains and hills of the Frontier. The word means " dust-colour." The Punjab Infantry,[1] with one exception, straightway adopted it, together with many other valuable hints from Guide Corps ways. Real " Khakee," be it said, is very unlike the green-brown colour

[1] 1st Punjab Infantry which adopted a green (Rifle) uniform.

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which is common among so many of the Colonial troops we have lately seen in London. Let us hope that if "Khaki" has really come to stay with us, pains may be taken to obtain the true colour, which is almost that of a dusty macadamized road in summer.

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It was at the period at which these notes have now arrived (1853–4) that I first made the acquaintance of the even then redoubtable, and since highly distinguished, John Nicholson, who fell so gloriously at Delhi. He had then lately succeeded Reynell Taylor in the civil and political charge of the Bunnoo district. He saw, and was interested in, my endeavours to make the 5th Punjab Infantry a pattern frontier regiment. Impelled, perhaps, by my example or by his own fondness for soldiering, he forthwith set to work to drill a battalion of the old Sikh Army which had been transferred to the Punjab Military Police, and placed under his orders at Bunnoo. We were amused to see Nicholson, on mornings when he could snatch an hour or two from his absorbing civil duties, laboriously drilling this veteran battalion in the prescribed movements of the period on the dusty parade ground common to us both. Nicholson was held in high repute by us for the stern and successful way in which he dealt with the disorderly tribesmen, over whom he was placed. On one occasion he detected the approach of a would-be assassin as he sat trying cases in the Bunnoo Court-house. Without a moment's hesitation, Nicholson, who had a loaded pistol always on his desk, shot the man dead, just as he lifted his arm to strike. Indeed for many years we frontier officers lived in constant danger of assassination; so much so that our swords and pistols always accompanied us in our out-door pursuits and daily exercise.

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CHAPTER IV

The Turkish Contingent

1854–6

A TOO ardent devotion to the fascinating sport of shooting the wild goat (*markhor*) and wild sheep (*ooriyal* or *gudd*) in the hills of the Trans-Indus Frontier, caused a serious illness in the autumn of 1854. The frontier officers had by common agreement built a sort of rough club-house on the level summit of a Trans-Indus mountain known as Shaick Budeen. This mountain rises to a height of 4,000 feet, and overlooks the great strip of level country which extends southward from Dera Ismail Khan on the Indus to Scinde.[1] Shaick Budeen in those days afforded excellent shooting. The nights were always cool in summer, and the mountain was easily reached, both from Bunnoo and Dera Ismail Khan. The officers at those stations were glad to resort to the club-house for a fortnight or three weeks at a time, as a relief from the great heat of the plains. At a visit I paid to the mountain in the autumn mentioned I indulged too freely in a sport involving great fatigue and exposure to the sun, and received my punishment in the shape of a bad abscess in the hand, which, as no medical aid was at hand, brought me very nearly to death's door. The timid hand of a Native apothecary would not cut deep enough to give me effective relief; and it was only when Esculapius appeared in the shape of a kind surgeon, Dr J. E. Tuson, from Dera Ismail Khan, that an effectual incision was made. A subsequent trip to Kashmir did much to

[1] As explained in the last chapter.

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restore my usual health, but for a perfect cure I was advised to take furlough to England, and in April 1855 took passage accordingly by P. and O. steamer from Bombay. I had then completed more than fourteen years' Indian service without holiday home.

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The Crimean war was then at its height, and the most strenuous efforts were being made in England to reinforce the army at Sebastopol after the trying winter of 1854 in the trenches. A German legion and an Italian legion were in course of formation, and the Sultan had agreed to place a large force of his disciplined Turks at the disposal of England during the continuance of the war. Officered by Englishmen and paid by England, it was believed that Turkish troops would repeat the gallantry they had shown the previous year on the Danube. I had heard vaguely of this Turkish contingent, as it was to be called, when at Bombay; and a friend and fellow-passenger of mine, Captain Goldsmid, of the Madras Army,[1] agreed with me that it would be a fine thing if we could get service in the Turkish contingent, and spend our furlough in fighting the Russians, instead of amusing ourselves in England.

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Accordingly Goldsmid and I left the P. and O. on arrival at Alexandria, and took passage in a local steamer to Constantinople. At Constantinople we applied for service to General Sir Robert Vivian, who had been appointed to command the Contingent. Our credentials and antecedents were good enough for him to say he would be glad of our services, but that for the moment he had nothing to offer us. He therefore counselled us to continue our journey to England, ready to be recalled in case employment could be found for us. Of course we took this kind advice, but before we proceeded to England, we

[1] Now General Sir F. J. Goldsmid, K.C.S.I., C.B.

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crossed the Black Sea to Balaclava, and I availed myself of a letter of introduction given me by my friend Reynell Taylor to his brother, who was commanding a battery of Horse Artillery with the English Army. Under Captain Taylor's able guidance I studied the positions of the allies, and as far as possible the Russian defences. I need not say how much this interesting expedition increased my desire to obtain service in the Turkish contingent, which it was fair to presume would join in the English siege operations. From the Crimea we returned to Constantinople, and took passage by the first steamer to England. We had hardly been in England a fortnight when the hoped for summons came. I was to be Assistant Quarter-master-General, Goldsmid Asistant Adjutant-General at the headquarters of the Contingent, both of us with the local rank of Major. We returned to Constantinople in hot haste.

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The idea of taking a large body of Turkish troops into our pay, and officering them with Englishmen, was excellent. It had begun to be recognized in England that the English and French commanders at Sebastopol had made a mistake, in that, instead of making the most of the fine fighting qualities of the Turkish soldiers, they had condemned those of them who were with the army of the Crimea to serve as beasts of burden to the rest of the army. But this short-sightedness was not uncommon at that day with English officers of a certain school, who, accustomed to see only the British soldier, smart and well pipe-clayed, would not believe in the possible value of soldiers not presenting an equally smart appearance, and were still more sceptical if their skins should happen to be dark. Yet Lord Raglan should not have fallen into this mistake, for he had seen the Portuguese troops in the Peninsula, and knew that the Duke of Wellington had often put

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them in the forefront of his battles. Arnaud too was no stranger to the fighting qualities of his Turcos. But all previous experience had been forgotten, and the sturdy Turkish infantry, than which I venture to think there is not a better in Europe, had not been thought worthy to fight in their own quarrel alongside of French and English battalions. Lord Roberts would have been the commander for the occasion. He would not have made the Turkish soldiers into hewers of wood and drawers of water. He would not have treated them with the supercilious indifference which posted the Turkish infantry in the weak and meaningless forts in front of Balaclava on the memorable day of the Balaclava charge!

1854

I joined the Turkish contingent in its camp at Byukdere on the Bosphorus. It had been reported as ready for active service by the English general in command, and one of my early duties as Assistant Quarter-master-General was to assist my chief, the late Colonel Edward Wetherall of the Guards, to embark the Turks in the transports which were ready to take them to the Crimea. Yes, to the Crimea, but not, as we had fondly hoped, to Sebastopol.

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To the great disappointment of the English officers, in which the Turks of all ranks shared, the collective wisdom of the English and French commanders at Sebastopol could find no better use for our 10,000 infantry, complete with the requisite artillery and transport, than to send them to garrison Kertch! This place, quite outside the real theatre of the war, had recently fallen, after a nominal resistance, before a mixed English and French force sent from Sebastopol. It was most unlikely that, whilst so fully occupied at Sebastopol, the Russians would make any great effort to retake the place, which at the moment had no military value. It really appeared as

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if the English and French commanders could not make up their minds to trust soldiers of whose fighting qualities such proof had been given the year before on the Danube, and had sent the Contingent where it would have the least possible chance of being useful! At the time, the Contingent—which, be it remembered, consisted of veteran regiments of the Turkish army—was placed under orders to embark for Kertch it had been embodied under English officers long enough to admit of its being quite efficient for field service. The English Staff of the Contingent and the transport were complete. The Contingent consisted of about 10,000 infantry distributed in two divisions, with the usual proportion of artillery. Of the excellence of the latter arm in the Turkish army there have never been two opinions. The Contingent was only incomplete in cavalry, which, though promised by the Sultan, had not yet been supplied. The absence of cavalry afforded another reason why its destination should have been Sebastopol rather than Kertch. At Sebastopol cavalry could be dispensed with; at Kertch it was essential. Everything was working smoothly. The Turkish battalion commanders had yielded up their commands with a good grace to the English officers who were to replace them. The inferior officers had not been interfered with, and performed their usual duties under their English commandant. The change of command had given no shock to discipline, and was pleasing rather than otherwise to the men, who were now assured of their full pay and rights without deduction. Good and plentiful rations added to the popular content. The English commandants on their part, had displayed the usual tact of their countrymen in dealing with soldiers of a different race. They had limited their interference, for the most part, to a general control of their battalions, and had left lesser matters of drill and discipline to be dealt with by the

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Turkish officers as before. Everything, in fact, pointed to the likelihood of the Turkish divisions proving a very valuable reinforcement to the decimated English Army at Sebastopol.

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The embarkation and disembarkation of the Contingent was not, I daresay, conducted with the precision and regularity which has been attained in the British Army at the present day; but both operations were quickly and efficiently carried out, thanks to the docility of Turkish soldiers and their simple requirements on board ship. A few days brought the transports to anchor at Kertch, which was to be our destination till the end of the war. The town had been taken almost without resistance by the English and French troops, but it had nevertheless suffered severely at their hands. Half the houses and buildings had been dismantled, so as to be of little use to the incoming garrison; but enough remained to afford shelter to one division, whilst the other was destined to form a standing camp at Yenikale, the site of the old fort of that name. Both divisions subsequently fortified their positions under the direction of the commanding Engineer of the Contingent, Captain Stokes, R.E.[1]

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I had hardly got used to my new duties under Colonel Wetherall's able teaching, when he was summoned to Sebastopol to fill an appointment at the English Head-Quarters. As being the next senior officer of the Q. M. G's department, I was ordered to take over Colonel Wetherall's duties until the arrival of his successor. This was rather alarming to me, for I was yet new to the duties of the department: but Wetherall encouraged me by the homely remark that "no wall is so hard that it will not give way if only you will ram your head hard enough

[1] The late Sir J. Stokes, K.C.B.

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against it." So I was comforted. It was some months before Wetherall's successor arrived in the person of Major John Morris, of the 17th Lancers, one of the survivors of the Balaclava charge. He was even newer to the Quarter-master-General's duties than I was by the time he joined, and consequently his arrival caused little change in my duties.

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Colonel Wetherall used to describe the relative responsibilities of Adjutant-General and Quarter-Master-General as follows: Adjutant-General, Discipline, Ammunition; Quarter-master-General—all the rest! As may be supposed, therefore, I had plenty to do during the three months' interregnum between Colonel Wetherall and Major Morris. I had an able assistant in Captain Jones Parry, of the Madras Army, and was indebted both to the General commanding and to the Chief of the Staff for much advice and assistance in performing my multifarious duties. With such help, joined to the zeal and energy of thirty-five, I was able to make rapid strides in departmental efficiency.

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But apart from the merely departmental experience gained at this period, I was getting rid of the narrow views on professional subjects which insensibly grow upon a man confined to a limited sphere of duty. Though not taking an active part in the siege of Sebastopol, the Contingent was yet one of the pawns upon the board of a great campaign. The varying questions which I had to meet from day to day were such as must present themselves when large bodies of troops are engaged on active service. I was in daily intercourse with superior officers of all branches of the service, who came to me on matters of all sorts as being the channel of communication with the General. Artillery, Engineer, Commissariat

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and Transport questions, often of great intricacy, constantly arose, and had to be mastered in all their bearings before I placed them before the General for decision. I was surprised when I got back to my regimental command in India to find how much that year's service in the Crimea had done for me; what an advantage it had given me over my less fortunate comrades; how my judgment had matured, and how much more efficient I had become in my profession.

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It has been noted above that the Turkish cavalry, in completion of the Contingent, had not joined us when we embarked for the Crimea. We had, however, about fifty Turkish troopers under an English lieutenant, just enough to supply mounted orderlies for the two positions of Kertch and Yenikale. This small party was sent one day soon after our arrival at Kertch to reconnoitre the country in the direction of the reputed Russian outposts. As ill luck would have it, it fell in with a superior body of Cossacks, and, the story was, did not behave well. The English Officer, Lieutenant Sherwood, was killed, and the men returned in disorder to Kertch. It fell to me to report what had happened to the General. The General was at dinner with his personal Staff. I suppose I made my report in a somewhat excited manner, for I remember I drew upon myself a just rebuke from General Vivian, which I have never forgotten since, and which has many times saved me from the betrayal of outward excitement in other more trying situations.

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After this occurrence, the General forebore to trust the few Turkish troopers to perform reconnoitring duty. Henceforward such reconnoitring as was possible was performed by a small body of Tartar horsemen commanded by a very worthy Polish officer, and attached to the Quarter-master-

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General's department. When the long nights of the winter of 1856 made General Vivian anxious, he arranged with me that I should every morning accompany these Tartar horsemen on an examination of the country for four or five miles in front of our defences. It was not until I returned and made my report that he was relieved of the apprehension that the Russians were likely to attack us. It may be imagined that this duty imposed no slight strain upon me, as it was necessary to be in the saddle every morning an hour or two before daybreak in a Crimean winter. However, my frontier training enabled me to bear this strain, until Major Morris arrived to relieve me of many of my responsibilities. Whether the Russians ever seriously thought of attacking us at Kertch may be doubted; but taking advantage of our deficiency in Cavalry, they constantly menaced us with attack, and on several occasions caused us to stand to our arms for some hours at a time expecting it.

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During the ten or twelve months that the Contingent garrisoned Kertch, we lived in the daily hope of a change of our destination, and that we should be brought into closer touch with the Russians. We had been disappointed of joining the English and French armies at Sebastopol, but it seemed incredible that the allied Generals should be for ever blind to the advantage which the occupation of Eupatoria, for instance, by a body of 10,000 Turks offered. The Turkish battalions, I must repeat, were not newly raised recruits, but seasoned troops of the regular Turkish army. Our supply of transport was sufficient to make the Contingent fairly mobile as a field force. When, therefore, our employment at Eupatoria was finally negatived, and Kertch was assigned us as our destination, we still hoped that employment might be found for us on the northern

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shore of the Black Sea, where there were several tempting points of attack. Our hopes even went so far as Circassia, and we also resented highly that the active operations undertaken by Oomur Pasha on the eastern coast of the Black Sea were not confided to our General and his troops.

In the winter of 1855 General Vivian was summoned to Sebastopol to confer with the allied Generals, and our hopes of more active service rose to fever height; but to the best of my recollection the arrangements then discussed had reference to a possible campaign in the country to the north of Sebastopol, which never came off, but in which, if the war had gone on, the Contingent was to have played an important part.

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During the stay of the Contingent at Kertch my friend Goldsmid and I occupied in common a partially ruined house in the town. This house, like every other, had been gutted of furniture by the original expeditionary force; but we set up our camp-beds under shelter of the bare walls, and with the help of an elderly Russian female whom we found on the premises, lived not uncomfortably on our army rations. Besides the elderly Russian female above mentioned, our establishment consisted of my French and Goldsmid's Italian servant, and two Turkish orderlies. The latter were chiefly of use as affording us practice in the Turkish language; and we made such good use of them and the Turkish grammar, that in three or four months we were certified as able to carry on our military duties without the aid of an interpreter, and so became entitled to an extra allowance of, I think in my case, £4 per month.

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This reminds me that I have never felt so rich as during the time I served in the Turkish Contingent.

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The East India Company, my then paymasters, were strangely jealous that their officers should choose to serve their country for a time under another flag than their own ; and, ignoring our having so chosen, proudly rejected the opportunity of withholding from us our Indian furlough-pay. On the other hand, the British Government, to make the service attractive, offered us the rank and pay of the grade superior to that which we held in the Indian Army. Thus I drew furlough-pay as a captain and commandant of the 5th Punjab Infantry, and ordinary pay as major and a Staff officer in the Turkish Contingent ; and the two together amounted to what I thought in those days a very comfortable sum !

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Although my duties as a Staff Officer did not bring me into very close touch with the Turkish soldiers, yet I saw enough of them to impress me greatly in their favour. They had not the smart appearance of which Western nations think so much, but their *physique* was excellent, being for the most part that of healthy agricultural peasants. We found them simple, docile, and patient under hardships in a high degree. Our excellent and plentiful rations delighted them, and they appreciated the regular receipt of their pay without any of the petty pilferings from which they had suffered at the hands of their Turkish paymasters. With these advantages it is not wonderful if they soon fell into habits of respect and obedience to their English officers. The English commandants, on their part,were content, in the best-commanded regiments, to waive a too minute interference with the drill and discipline of their regiments, which, as said above, they left as far as possible in the hands of the " Bimbashees," or Turkish commandants, and the inferior Turkish officers. Having commanded a regiment in India

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largely composed of the co-religionists of the Turks, I was interested in observing how the different English commandants understood their duties as commanding Turkish battalions. Indeed I sometimes regretted that I was serving on the Staff instead of commanding a Turkish regiment. To this day I am proud of having served with Turkish troops, and the commission I hold as *Kaim-makan*, or Lieutenant-Colonel in the Turkish Army, with the sprawling sign-manual of the Sultan at the head of it, is among my treasured possessions. I follow the fortunes of the Turkish Army with the greatest interest. My too publicly expressed admiration for the Turkish soldiers in the Servian war was once near forcing me into a duel with a Servian officer; and Turkish bravery at Plevna and elsewhere in the Russo-Turkish war has always stirred in me warm feelings of pride and comradeship.

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One of the pleasantest duties I had to perform whilst serving with the Contingent was when I was deputed by General Vivian to accompany a reconnaissance of the Spit or Tongue of Arabat by two English gun-boats. This curious formation assumes the form of a narrow tongue of land many miles long, extending from the northern coast of the Crimea right across the sea of Azoff, nearly to Genitchi. As the war drew to its close reports reached the Generals at Sebastopol that the Russians were using the Spit as a road for withdrawing gradually from the Crimea. Two gun-boats—the one which I was on board of commanded by the present distinguished Admiral, Sir Edward Commerell—were detailed for the reconnaissance. We landed *en route* at a point on the north coast of the Crimea to turn the Russians out of a blockhouse which we sighted from the sea, and thence steered for the fort of Arabat at the Crimean end of the Tongue. I

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sketched the fort as it appeared to us from the sea, and we then steamed along the Tongue to a point midway between Arabat and Genitchi. Here we landed, and found the Spit to afford a solid roadway twenty or thirty yards wide, and slightly elevated above the surrounding sea. There was not a trace of its being, or having been, used for military purposes. With this intelligence we returned to Kertch, and the falsehood of the rumour which had led to the reconnaissance was duly reported to Sebastopol.

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The English officers who obtained employment with the Turkish Contingent were drawn from various sources: from the half-pay list of the Army, from the Indian Army, and to some extent from what I may call without offence the adventurer class. Perhaps I shall be excused for thinking that the most efficient of them came from the Indian Army. We are accustomed to the command of co-religionists of the Turks; indeed, in days past we Indian officers thought that no one could deal with Oriental soldiers but ourselves. We do not think so now, with the example of the Egyptian Army before our eyes, trained to its present high efficiency by officers of the British Line. The ability of the English officer, from whatever service drawn, to produce efficient soldiers out of the most unpromising material is now one of our most legitimate boasts. And so it happened with the Turkish Contingent that the machine worked with perfect smoothness under very novel conditions, thanks to the inherent tact and ability of its English officers. I say novel, because our Turks, it must be remembered, were not recruits receiving their first training from English officers, but trained battalions belonging to an old and historical army, who were required, both officers and men, to accept officers of a strange race in supersession of those who had enlisted and trained them.

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Our Chief, Sir Robert Vivian, had many qualifications which fitted him for such a command. He was an Indian officer, who had acquired a certain reputation as Adjutant-General of the Madras Army. His personality was imposing and dignified, and his bearing to those under him was always courteous and engaging. In the inception of the Contingent he was brought much into contact with the high Turkish officials at Constantinople, and made himself very acceptable to them. In the after stages of the Contingent his tact was displayed in his dealing with the displaced high Turkish officers, and in the moderate amount of interference he allowed with the ways and customs of the Turkish troops. As the Contingent was never brought into line with the English Army at Sebastopol it is impossible to judge of General Vivian's capacity as a fighting general; but he had the perfect confidence of his officers, who desired nothing better than to serve under him in the siege operations. My own intercourse, official and private, with General Vivian was most pleasant. In after years, when he became a member of the Indian Council, he was always pleased to see me, and to talk of the time when I had served under his command.

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General Vivian had for the Chief of the Staff an officer of some mark—Major-General J. Michel, who had served with credit at the head of his regiment (the 6th Warwickshire) in our early South African wars. The duties of Chief of the Staff were not understood in those days as they are now; and my recollection of General Michel is that he was rather in the position of a simple second in command to General Vivian, or, in other words, the fifth wheel of a coach, than the active regulator of Staff duties generally. Major-General (afterwards Sir Arthur) Cuninghame, who subsequently commanded with

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credit at the Cape, commanded the first Infantry division. The second division was commanded by the better known General Neill, of the Madras Army, so distinguished in the earlier days of the Indian Mutiny, who fell gloriously in Havelock's attempt to relieve Lucknow in 1857. No more competent officer than my honoured chief, Colonel Edward Wetherall, could have been found for head of the Quarter-Master-General's department; and indeed all the higher officers of the Contingent had been carefully selected. Of the English officers generally it may be said, that they threw themselves heartily into their work, and quickly won the respect and confidence of their men.

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The peace brought much disappointment to us of the Contingent, for it finally destroyed the hope of serving in the thick of the war which had led us to take service with the Osmanli troops. Still I had the satisfaction of feeling that I had given up a well-earned holiday for a laudable purpose, and had gained an experience of Staff duties, and of actual war on a large scale, which years of service on the frontier of India would not have given me. It was also cause of congratulation that the declaration of peace would enable me to return to India within my furlough, and so to resume the command which it would have grieved me to forfeit, but which, if the war had gone on, I was prepared to forfeit rather than quit the work to which I had put my hand. I knew that I had scant favour to hope from the Court of Directors, who, as before said, were not very kindly disposed to those of their officers who had sought temporary service away from India, however honourable their motives: so probably, if I had failed to join my regiment within my leave, my appointment would have been forfeited.

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The last duty I had to perform with the Contingent occurred when, on the proclamation of peace, I was detached to Constantinople to receive and disembark the Turkish troops on their return from the Crimea. This duty performed, I spent the short remaining time of my furlough in England. My services had been favourably reported on by General Vivian, and in due course the rank of Major (in which I had served with the Contingent) was confirmed to me by brevet. I also received the 4th class of the Medjidee and the Turkish Crimean medal; and on the whole had no reason to regret the step I had taken in seeking service with the Turkish Contingent.

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The few remaining weeks of my furlough after my return from Constantinople were happily spent in the society of relations and friends, and heartened me up for a further spell of service on the frontier. I had gained much by my twelve months' service with the Turks. My ideas had greatly broadened out, and my efficiency as an officer increased, by contact with other branches of the profession, and by the responsibilities of a higher military position. I was no longer the simple frontier officer, but had gained experience on active service with the duties of a most important branch of the Staff. So I returned to my Indian duties well satisfied with myself, and hopeful for the future.

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My route from England to the frontier led me in the first instance to Bombay, where I found relations whom I had missed seeing in England. Here I made my first acquaintance with Sir Bartle Frere, then Governor of Bombay. My passport to his acquaintance was my friendship with Goldsmid, my comrade in the Turkish Contingent, who had served under Sir Bartle Frere when he was commissioner of Scinde, and was highly valued by him as a most useful subordinate.

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It was the time of the great speculative mania at Bombay, when every one lost his head in the immense prosperity of the moment, and fortunes were made in a day. I was invited to join in many promising enterprises, but in my anxiety to rejoin my regiment was fortunate enough to reject them all, and pushed on to the next stage of my long journey, Kurrachee. From Kurrachee I travelled by river steamer to Kotree on the Indus, near Mooltan, and had the small triumph of being able to eat a hearty breakfast whilst the skipper of the steamer was so ill from the rough water at the mouth of the Indus that he was unable to bear me company!

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From Mooltan to Kohat, to which station the 5th Punjab Infantry had removed from Bunnoo, where I had left it in 1855, the journey had to be performed on horseback. The rules of the Frontier Force permitted officers who were travelling on duty to make requisitions on the officers commanding Cavalry regiments from Scinde to Kohat to furnish them with a troop-horse at each frontier post to carry him to the next post. This meant changing your mount about every twelve miles; and as we were mostly provided with what Sir John Lawrence was believed to have called a "frontier behind," fifty or sixty miles a day were not difficult of accomplishment. I think I took nine days to get from Mooltan to Kohat, sleeping each night in the little square mud forts which formed the frontier posts, and depending on the Native officer or non-commissioned officer in command to provide me with a frugal meal. I have often since remembered this journey as one of the pleasantest I have ever made.

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This journey brought me back to my regiment two or three months before the outbreak of the great Indian Mutiny, some reminiscences of which I shall describe in the following notes.

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CHAPTER V

The Indian Mutiny, 1857

KOHAT, the frontier station at which I rejoined the 5th after my service with the Turkish Contingent, was, when I joined the Punjab Frontier Force in 1850, nothing but a large Pathan village in the valley of the same name. It has of late years become a strategical point of some importance, and was the base of Roberts' advance to Kabul by the Kuram route in 1879 and 1880, and of General Sir William Lockhart's Tirah campaign in the late nineties. The Kohat Valley lies to the south of the adjacent larger Peshawar Valley, but is separated from it by a great wedge of mountain country inhabited by a branch of the Afreedee tribe. There is a rough road through this wedge connecting Kohat with Peshawar, of which road, by peaceful arrangement with the Afreedees, we were supposed in early days to have the free use. The road was, however, frequently closed against us by the Afreedees, or only used at the risk of some tragic incident. At the period at which these notes have now arrived, namely, the great Sepoy Mutiny, we were happily on good terms with the Afreedees, as well as with most others of the frontier tribes.

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I interrupt my personal recollections for a moment to notice some more general matters. The Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 has been ascribed to various causes. To me it has always appeared the highly natural ebullition of a great, idle and homogeneous body of men, conscious of its own strength and of the

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reduced strength of the English troops which were its proper counterpoise. This army had seen in two recent campaigns, that of the Sutlej and of the Punjab, that a Native Force could meet an English Army on something like equal terms, and that the *nuseeb* (fortune) of their English masters was not so great as they had been brought up to suppose. Minor causes, doubtless, were having their effect upon the loyalty of the Native Army. Hereditary malcontents, like the Delhi princes, and discontented pensioners like the Mahratta Nana, were astute enough to see that the times were favourable for giving effect to long cherished ambitions and designs.

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But leaving these speculations, it will be interesting to note what were the forces which, when the first shock of mutiny was felt in the outbreak at Meerut in May 1857, seemed likely to be arrayed against us, if mutiny should spread to the entire Native Army.

The regular Bengal Infantry at the beginning of 1857 consisted of seventy-four numbered regiments, all, or almost all, of which were mainly recruited from the province of Oude, with a sprinkling of men from the North-west Provinces. Most of the regiments had been drilled to a fair state of efficiency, according to the lights of the time, by their English officers, who took a laudable professional pride in the soldier-like appearance of their men, and in their proficiency in the work of the parade ground. There had not been wanting in the near past warnings that discontent existed in the ranks; but for the most part the English officers denied any such feeling on the part of their own regiments. This confidence in the loyalty of their own men was particularly evinced by the senior officers, many of whom, even after the mutiny at

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Meerut, could not believe that their regiments were contaminated, and persisted to the end in asserting that they were unjustly suspected of disaffection.

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Besides the seventy-four Line regiments, there were a number of what were classed as Irregular regiments. Such were the Oude local regiments, and the Gwalior Contingent; and local battalions, under various names, supplemented the Regular regiments at several places in the Bengal Presidency. These were also, with some notable exceptions, such as four Goorkah regiments and two battalions of Sikhs, recruited from the same population as the regular Native Infantry, and had the same interests and feelings.

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The mutiny at Meerut, May 1857, was immediately followed by that of the Native regiments at Delhi, and the Goverment was at once faced by the possibility of the whole of the Native Army following the evil example thus set. Fortunately, however, there was a considerable body of Native troops which, as has been before explained, stood quite apart from the regular Native Army, and was recruited from entirely different races. This body was the Punjab Frontier Force, to which I had the good fortune to belong. All arms together, the Force numbered about 12,000 men. The wisdom of Lord Dalhousie, guided by the prescience of Sir Henry Lawrence, had ordained that these 12,000 soldiers should be organized and maintained quite distinct from the regular Native Army, and should not even be under the control of the Commander-in-Chief. To them was assigned the guardianship of the new frontier acquired by the formal annexation of the Punjab, and their service was cast in the remote trans-Indus country, away from all intercourse and community of interest with the Bengal Sepoys.

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The Punjab races alone supplied the material of this Force.

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During the six or seven years of its existence, prior to the Mutiny, this Frontier Force had gradually acquired high military efficiency in the continual, if petty, warfare of the frontier. That it would be faithful to its salt was at once assumed by Sir John Lawrence, the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, who took upon himself all responsibility when communication with Calcutta was cut off, and one of the earliest measures directed by him, when the seriousness of the situation disclosed itself, had been to send the Guide Corps and another regiment of the Frontier Force by forced marches to Delhi, so confident was he that the Force was loyal.

I may now resume my personal recollections.

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Before doing so, let me say explicitly that I am not one of the heroes of the Mutiny. I and my regiment were not so fortunate as to share in the siege of Delhi nor in the defence of the Residency of Lucknow. We did not even get to Lucknow in time for Lord Clyde's relief of the Residency nor for his final capture of the city. My known acquaintance with the language of the frontier, and some small success which I had, in the first days of the Mutiny, in putting down incipient rebellion in Eusufzye, made Sir John Lawrence think that it was for the public interest that I should remain for the present on the frontier. Other regiments of the Force were therefore preferred to mine for service down the country, and I was only released from frontier service in time to share in the final pacification of Oude, and in some of the later and less heroic incidents of the Mutiny. Nevertheless it was the good fortune of my regiment and myself to render the Government one notable service.

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Sir John Lawrence and his able coadjutors, Neville Chamberlain, Sydney Cotton, Herbert Edwardes, and John Nicholson, who at that time formed a sort of committee of public safety at Peshawar, believed from the first in the readiness of the regiments of the Force to do battle with the mutinous Sepoys. Still there was no proof of their spirit until the first shot came to be fired against the mutineers. It fell to my regiment to fire this first shot, and thus to give a lead, though perhaps not a needed one, to the other regiments of the Force. At any rate they did follow the lead thus given them, and thereafter stood shoulder to shoulder with the English regiments at Delhi and Lucknow, and on to the end of the war.

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It was on a sultry evening in the middle of May 1857 that a mounted orderly, who had ridden in hot haste through the Pass from Peshawar, brought me a confidential and urgent letter from General Chamberlain. The letter was to the effect that the Native regiments at Meerut had mutinied and murdered their officers, and that it was believed that the troops at Delhi had followed their example. I was to march with all possible speed to Attock, and secure the bridge of boats there, which was at the time in the hands of a party of the 55th Native Infantry, a regiment under grave suspicion of disaffection. The bridge of boats at Attock, as securing communication between Peshawar and India, was, of course, most important in view of what was happening at Meerut and Delhi.

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As all the Infantry regiments of the Frontier Force were supplied with permanent carriage sufficient to move them in light marching order on service, I was able to commence my march that same night. Attock was reached in four long

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marches, rendered unusually fatiguing by the intense heat, and the nature, I cannot say of the road, but of the track, which led through low hills. On arrival at the old Sikh fort at Attock I sent one of my few officers—we were but four—with orders to relieve the guard of the 55th Native Infantry at the bridge, and any other guards he might find. The bridge guard, however, not altogether unreasonably, demurred to giving over its charge until it had an order from its own commanding officer. As the commanding officer of the 55th was miles away from Attock, this was, of course, absurd; and my officer, to carry out his orders, warned the guard that if they did not deliver their post quietly, he would have to use force. Exactly what then happened, in the hurry of events which followed, I never clearly learned, but the guard yielded at last to some kind of force, and, calling in their comrades of the other guards, the whole marched off sullenly, taking the Peshawar road with the intention of rejoining their regiment at Murdan in the Eusufzye country.

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It was of the first necessity to warn Nowshera, a military station intermediate to Peshawar, and about fifteen miles from Attock, of the probable approach of such a body of exasperated Sepoys, who might do fearful mischief to the women and children of the 27th Foot, who I knew had been left with very scanty protection when that regiment marched some days before to Peshawar. As it turned out, the warning was not necessary, for the Sepoys contented themselves, on arrival at Nowshera, with collecting their comrades who were on detachment there, and then continued their march to join their regimental headquarters.

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I had hardly made arrangements for the safety

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of the all-important bridge when an urgent message came from the "Committee of Public Safety" at Peshawar directing me to leave half my regiment at Attock and to march that night with the other half to a given rendezvous some four miles from the fort of Murdan. I was told that I should be joined there by a strong British detachment with guns. The message added that the united Force was intended to disarm the 55th Native Infantry, then in the fort at Murdan, as their mutinous intentions were no longer doubtful, in spite of the protestations of their commanding officer, Colonel Spottiswoode.[1]

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That night march remains in my memory as the most fatiguing I ever made. The distance to the rendezvous was about twenty-five miles, with the Kabul River to cross at the sixteenth. The heat was, of course, excessive. The marches from Kohat to Attock, though only four, had been long and rough, and were performed during the usual hours of sleep. The time was one of intense excitement. All these causes combined to make this long night march unusually trying. To add to it all, we fully expected to find Nowshera in the hands of the mutinous Sepoys, and that our further march would be opposed by them. Unable to sit my horse for sleep, I threw myself on the ground by the roadside and snatched ten minutes of delicious repose. This restored me, and as the day broke we entered Nowshera with all due military precautions. As already said, we found the Sepoys gone, and the families uninjured.

When the English women first saw the then unusual Khaki uniform of my men, they would not believe that we had come, amongst other reasons,

[1] I refer the reader, for a notice of this officer's strange infatuation in favour of Hindoostanee Sepoys, to Lord Roberts' *Forty-One Years in India*, vol. i. p. 58.

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for their own protection. As soon as they were satisfied of our friendly character they brought the tired men water and other refreshments.

After a short halt at Nowshera the Kabul River was crossed by ferry, and we reached the appointed rendezvous soon after sunrise. The Peshawar detachment, which had also made a long night march, arrived soon after, and with it came the redoubtable John Nicholson, whose name was then a tower of strength on the trans-Indus frontier, so much so, that it was a common saying among the Natives that the tramp of Nicholson's horse at Rawal Pindee could be heard at Peshawar. He and I had been friends, as I have related, three years before, when we were together at the frontier station of Bunnoo; and his being with us on the present occasion was very agreeable to me and particularly to my men, who admired his commanding and masterful personality. Nothing now delayed the march of our united Force for the scene of the intended disarmament.

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Before we had gone far, it was seen that something unusual was passing at Fort Murdan, which was in full view, and presently a party of about 100 Sepoys, with British officers at its head, was seen to issue from the fort and to be approaching us. This party proved to be the faithful remnant of the 55th, and we learnt from the officers that the rest of the regiment, 700 or 800 strong, had marched out of the fort without orders, at dawn of day, and had gone in the direction of the frontier. We also learnt that Colonel Spottiswoode, who had never ceased to protest the fidelity of his men, had that morning blown out his brains in disgust at their conduct. This sad news was confirmed by a letter found on the Colonel's table addressed to me.

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In this letter Spottiswoode reproached me as being

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the cause of the mutiny of his regiment and his consequent suicide. Of course he referred to the forcible removal of his guards at Attock. The letter was painful reading because Spottiswoode had been a brother officer, and very much my friend in earlier days; but my instructions were imperative, to place my own men in charge of the bridge as promptly as possible. The hesitation of the Sepoy guard to give over their post when formally called upon to do so by my officer, looked, under the circumstances of the day, very like mutiny. The situation had demanded strong measures, and poor Spottiswoode's reproaches, therefore, caused me the less remorse.

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However, on looking at the matter through a long vista of years, I am free to admit that a little more patience and forbearance on the part of my officer would not have been out of place, and that at least he might have referred them to me (for I was close at hand), to resolve their scruples as to giving up their post. As it was, the Sepoys, of course, told their comrades at Nowshera and at Murdan how they had been hustled off their post by a strange regiment and treated as mutineers, and that the regiment had better follow the example of their comrades elsewhere. But what happened at Attock can only have precipitated the mutiny of the regiment by a few hours, for their disloyalty was so well known to the authorities at Peshawar that the resolution had already been taken to disarm them before my regiment reached Attock.

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Arrangements were quickly made, by the officer commanding, for the pursuit of the mutinous regiment. Nicholson started hot-foot with a few Sowars of his personal escort, and my four companies were not long in following, The British troops from Peshawar, who were much exhausted by their long

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night march, were ordered into shelter in the buildings of the fort.

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The country between Murdan and the frontier, sixteen miles off, is flat, and only broken by occasional ravines and scrub jungle. To infantry in loose order this offered no impediment. We soon came upon stragglers left behind by their more robust comrades. One of the first was an unwieldy Native officer who was quickly brought to a stand by my Afreedee orderly, and passed to the rear minus a necklace of great gold beads which bespoke his rank in the Native army. Then a spluttering fire opened from one end of the line to the other, as more stragglers came in view or were unearthed from the ravines. The pursuit continued through the long summer day, but the main body of the mutineers was never overtaken, even by Nicholson and his mounted men. He joined me towards the end of the day close upon the frontier. He told me that he had marked down the mutineers to an isolated hill beyond the frontier, and had arranged for news to be brought to me if they showed signs of decamping during the night. It was arranged between us that I and my men should bivouac for the night where we were, and attack at break of day; and he promised to reinforce me with two mountain guns. Nicholson believed that in their tired and hungry state the mutinous regiment would offer little resistance. He was much impressed, he told me, by what he had seen during the day, and the experience he had had of how formidable even broken infantry could be when pursued by horsemen alone.

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I collected my weary men, who had marched all the preceding night and pursued all the day without food or rest. We marched again before dawn in full expectation of finding the mutineers where they had

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been marked down by Nicholson; but the watchmen had been traitors, and the mutineers had decamped during the night unreported. To pursue them farther was hopeless. For the moment they had escaped, but it was only to experience a worse fate than if they had waited for our attack. After being plundered and ill-treated by the rude tribesmen, with whom they hoped to ally themselves against us, the few who escaped death or starvation were ultimately given up to Colonel Becher, the Civil Officer in Hazara, and found their fate in the volley or on the gallows.

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The story of the pursuit of the 55th Native Infantry from Murdan need not have been related at such length, only that it had a bearing upon our fortunes in the momentous struggle which had been forced upon us. Up to this time there had been no opportunity of judging which side the 12,000 soldiers of the Frontier Force (whose isolation from the rest of the Native Army has been explained above), might take; whether they would be with us, or with the Sepoys. We hoped, and those who knew them best believed, that the Force would be loyal, but the proof was wanting. By the behaviour of the 5th Punjab Infantry on this occasion, the proof was afforded that they had no sympathy with the mutineers, and would fight against them. Sir John Lawrence and his able coadjutors at Peshawar, Chamberlain, Cotton, Edwardes and Nicholson, had every reason to believe that where one regiment had led, all would follow, and that thus our side was reinforced by 12,000 excellent troops. Sir John Lawrence was so pleased that he sent me a handsome letter of approval which he desired should be read to the men, with a gift of 500 rupees to be expended in a grand feast to the regiment.

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The temper of my regiment was to be put to a still

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severer test. A drumhead Court Martial, held at Murdan whilst we were absent in pursuit, had sentenced six of the prisoners taken in the pursuit to be shot. The order was carried out the same evening on our return to Murdan, half the firing party being furnished by the 5th and half by the British troops. My own men, without the smallest demur, simply followed the admonition I gave them *to take careful aim*. After this crucial test all doubt as to the loyalty of the Punjab Force was at an end.

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The punishment of the 55th Native Infantry was followed by the disarming in succession of the other Hindoostanee regiments in the Peshawar Valley by the same detachment from Peshawar and my regiment; and when this was over, the 5th went into temporary quarters at Murdan, charged to keep the peace of the frontier district known as Eusufzye. Twice in the course of the summer, whilst the great events of the Mutiny were taking place at Delhi and Lucknow, the Fifth was called into the field to repress frontier risings, caused or fomented by the curious colony of Hindoostanee fanatics which had established itself some years before at a village called Sitana on the upper course of the Indus. The strong frontier village of Narinjee in Eusufzye was the scene of both these risings. The first operations against this place were only partially successful. Four Companies of Infantry and two mountain guns could do little against a numerous and well armed enemy, posted in a strong Pathan village, in rear of which was a mountain. Each house was a small fortress divided from its neighbour by a narrow lane; and even if the rebels were driven from the last of these fortresses the mountain offered a safe retreat. Still, heavy loss was inflicted on the enemy, and when perfect success was seen to be unattainable they were too dispirited to interfere with our retirement. The second

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operation, a few days later, against Narinjee was on a much larger scale. Sir Sydney Cotton sent me from Peshawar 150 British Infantry and two 12-inch howitzers. Sir J. Lawrence added the 4th Punjab Infantry commanded by a friend and comrade of mine, the late General Sir Alfred Wild. This time I was strong enough to send a detachment to take the village in rear by an unguarded mountain path. This party was ably led by Captain Hoste, of the late 55th Native Infantry, who had joined me as second in command after the mutiny of his regiment. The attack from an unexpected quarter so shook the defenders of Narinjee, that they made but a feeble resistance to the frontal attack. When the village was in our hands, we blew up the towers and defences, and the elephants, which had conveyed the British soldiers from Peshawar, were used to demolish many of the fortified houses. The fame of Narinjee as a rallying point for disaffection was gone, and it has since borne the character of an ordinary pastoral and agricultural village.

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These two small affairs passed almost unnoticed in the presence of the greater events occurring at the time in India, but I profited by the experience and self-confidence they gave me. They gained me credit with both Sir John Lawrence and that good soldier Sir Sydney Cotton, then commanding at Peshawar; but, to my disappointment, they did not lead to my regiment being sent to share in the siege of Delhi. The 4th Punjab Infantry, which had fought with us at Narinjee, was sent instead, Sir John Lawrence, as I have said before, desiring to keep me on the frontier.

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A small personal adventure which befell me in one of the affairs related above may be worth recording. Whilst my regiment was slowly making its way through the intricate lanes of Narinjee, eight or nine

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men, easily recognizable as Hindoostanee fanatics from Sitana, appeared from behind a wall, naked tulwar in hand, and advanced towards me in the attitude of attack as practised in the native gymnasia. I fired at the group with the Dean and Adams revolver I then carried, but for the life of me I could not discharge the second chamber! I probably forgot, in the excitement of the moment, that the pressure on the trigger had to be withdrawn after each shot in order to clear the action for the next. I thought all was over with me, but a section of Sikhs happily saw my danger, and promptly came to the rescue. Since then I have always carried in service a Colts revolver.[1]

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It was not till Delhi had fallen and Lucknow had been relieved that my regiment received at last the order to join Lord Clyde's Army. With all the haste we made we could not be in time for the second capture of Lucknow, which finally broke the neck of the Mutiny, and left only its dying embers to be trodden out. On arrival at Lucknow we were put into brigade for the time with the 2nd Battalion Rifle Brigade under Brigadier A. Horsford. Our brigade formed part of the division commanded by that esteemed and distinguished officer General Sir Hope Grant, to whom was entrusted the final pacification of the province of Oude which had furnished the bulk of the mutinous Sepoys, and many of their most influential leaders. The present Field-Marshal, Lord (then Lieutenant-Colonel) Wolseley, was Sir Hope Grant's Assistant Adjutant-General, and I was indebted to him for much favour and consideration in the subsequent operations. In his active and busy life since, I cannot hope that he now remembers my very name.

[1] Lord Roberts, at p. 275, vol. i., of his *Forty-One Years in India*, records how a Dean and Adams revolver failed him under very similar circumstances.

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The rest of the year was spent in eternal marches and counter-marches through the length and breadth of Oude, varied by occasional indecisive encounters with an ever-vanishing enemy. There was just sufficient excitement to outweigh the discomforts of a hot weather campaign in India. During much of the time I was employed in independent commands, and the value of the frontier regiments being by this time fully recognized, the Fifth was entrusted by Sir Hope Grant, on more than one occasion, with the duty of dealing with detached parties of rebels which could not be conveniently reached by more formal operations. For my conduct of two of such affairs I was specially thanked by the Government of India. The duty finally fell to my regiment of tracking the arch-rebel Nana Sahib to his final hiding-place in Nepal beyond the river Raptee. From my camp on the Raptee I was able to send to Government the first positive news of the Nana's death from jungle fever. He has since been resuscitated more than once, but the rumours of his continued existence have always quickly died out. I was too well served at that time by my spies to be misinformed. It was soon after this that the regiments—the Fifth among the number—which had for the last two years known nothing but camp life, with its incessant toils and exposure, were assigned their permanent stations in Oude and elsewhere. My regiment was summoned to Lucknow in view to its forming an unit in the expeditionary Force then being organized for service in China under Sir Hope Grant.

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However on the representation of Sir John Lawrence that the regiments of the Frontier Force had only been lent for the repression of the Mutiny, and should now revert to their proper duty, the defence of the trans-Indus frontier, the destination of my regiment was changed, and it was ordered to return to Kohat, the

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station it had quitted in such haste two years before. This was the second great disappointment I have met with in my military life. The first, of course, was not being allowed to take my regiment to Delhi in 1857. To be disappointed now of the chance of service in China was so galling that I, in my vexation, applied for furlough to England, and left it to my second in command to march the regiment back to the frontier. The place of my regiment in the Expeditionary Force for China was taken by the 20th Punjab Infantry under the present General Sir Henry Brownlow, G.C.B. To the formation of this regiment in 1857 my regiment had contributed the strength of about three companies; consequently in the distinction gained by it as well in the China expedition as in later years, I have always felt a justifiable pride.

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Before I conclude my notes referring to the period of the Indian Mutiny, I shall relate one small personal experience. It so happened that Sir Hope Grant, when trying to come to close quarters with a large body of mutineers, was checked by the swollen condition of the River Goomtee, near Sultanpore. My regiment was put on duty to furnish a line of pickets along the river. I was inspecting the pickets in the early morning and was being sniped at from the opposite bank. The Sepoys would run out of cover and fire, and then scuttle back into safety. I was carrying a favourite sporting rifle, sighted to 800 yards, but not really sure at half that distance. One Sepoy appeared to me to furnish a fair mark, and I asked a Native officer who was with me what he judged the distance to be. He replied, 800 yards. I put up the 800 sight and fired, when the man fell, and was dragged into safety by his comrades. I was a fair rifle-shot, but this of course was a chance shot, for which I take no credit, but merely record it as a striking example of chance marksmanship.

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It was on the occasion of this check to Sir Hope Grant at the Goomtee, that a little incident occurred which I thought a good illustration on a small scale of what people call "the pomp of war." Grant, after some delay, had got his troops across the river, and was about to attack the rebel Force opposed to us. My regiment was skirmishing to the front to cover the crossing, when, looking to the rear, I saw that renowned old regiment, the 1st Madras Fusiliers, advancing towards us in line, with its colours flying and band playing. The effect was heightened by a grand sunset just behind the regiment, and the sight altogether was most soul-stirring. I need hardly say how heartily the Fifth joined in the advance, or how quickly the enemy judged discretion to be the better part of valour!

Later in the evening the Fifth was ordered to cover the retirement of the troops to their camp on the river. It was pretty dark, but my men were well practised at retiring by successive lines of skirmishers. A staff officer, who ought to have known better, took upon himself to interfere with the movement, and thereby threw some of the files into confusion. It may be supposed that when I knew the cause of the confusion I did not pick the language in which I requested that officer to mind his own business.

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I think I have not mentioned so far in these notes that the Fifth was armed with the now obsolete two-grooved rifle carrying a belted ball, one of the earliest improvements, I believe, on the old "Brunswick" rifle of the Peninsular War. It was a very accurate weapon up to 150 or 200 yards. I have frequently, when superintending target practice, taken it out of the soldier's hand and made two or three inner circles, or bull's eyes, in succession at 150 or 200 yards. The defect of the weapon is the length

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of time it takes to load. The 20th Punjab Infantry, Brownlow's regiment, were armed with a short muzzle-loader, a very handy weapon for night work from its facility of loading. On one occasion when a party of my men in the subsequent Umbeyla campaign were ordered for a very exposed night picket, Brownlow persuaded me to permit an exchange of duties between my men and his, on account of his weapon being so much more handy for night work than mine. But I have to this day a fondness for the two-grooved rifle, which, though quite out of date now, did excellent service in its time.

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Since this chapter was written I have read Lord Wolseley's *Story of a Soldier's Life*, and at page 257 of the first volume I see this handsome appreciation of the regiments of the Punjab Frontier Force:—

"These Punjaub regiments consisted of fine fighting men, soldiers by instinct and by birth: Pathans, Punjaubee Mussulmans, Sikhs and even Afridees from beyond our frontiers. The officers for these regiments, carefully selected from the whole army in India, were generally the best men to be found in it, or, indeed I might say, in any army. These regiments of Irregulars remained strictly faithful to us throughout the vicissitudes of the dreadful Mutiny, and no men ever fought more gallantly than they did under the remarkable officers selected to lead them. Under men like Sir Dighton Probyn, Sam Browne, Hodson, Wilde, Vaughan, and other famous leaders, they could be depended upon to go anywhere and attempt anything."

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CHAPTER VI

After the Mutiny

1860–3

THE transfer of the direct government of India in 1859, from the East India Company to the Crown, followed the Indian Mutiny, and the consequent change in the status of Indian officers was generally acceptable to them. Hitherto, they had exercised authority in virtue of two commissions, one in the name of the East India Company, and one, of local validity only, in that of the Queen. The Indian officers were to derive their authority henceforth only from the Queen. Some there were who professed to view the change with regret, on the ground that they had always received more liberal treatment from the Company than they could hope for from the Crown. Many of these proved their sincerity by declining to enrol themselves (though qualified to do so) in the new Staff Corps, and by electing to remain "local." [1] I, and the majority of those who were eligible under the new terms, elected for the Staff Corps.

The scheme for the reorganization of the Army and of the creation of Staff Corps (there were to be three, one for each Presidency) is generally believed to have been the outcome of the present Field-Marshal Sir H. W. Norman's great aptitude for

[1] That is to say, to retain all their rights to promotion, pension, etc., as they existed under the régime of the East India Company, in preference to accepting the new order of things introduced when the Government of India was assumed by Queen Victoria.

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organization, and of his unrivalled knowledge of military details and army administration, acquired in the course of long service on the general Staff. The scheme as regards the Staff Corps has been repeatedly tinkered and amended, but the vital points still remain. A few years ago the three Staff Corps originally created were amalgamated in one under the name of the "Indian Staff Corps." This designation has now (1904) been altered into that of the "Indian Army." The last change is to be regretted. The "Indian Staff Corps" was surely well descriptive of a corps which is intended to supply officers for every conceivable form of public service; first, of course, for the Army in all its various branches, and secondly for the miscellaneous needs of the Indian public service generally.

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The short furlough to England which I had taken at the end of the Mutiny in 1859 had come to an end, and early in 1860 I was again in India. At Calcutta I renewed a slight previous acquaintance with Sir Henry (then Colonel) Norman. He acquainted me with some of the ideas under which he had evolved the scheme of the Staff Corps; and it was with his approval, if not at his suggestion, that, before returning to the frontier, I wrote an article on the Staff Corps in the *Calcutta Review*. The object of the article was to popularize the idea of the Staff Corps by explaining how it would affect the future of those who joined it, as well as of those who stood aloof from it. The article has long since passed into oblivion, though it was useful perhaps at the time. Its general tenour was to recommend the acceptance of the Staff-Corps conditions. It seemed to me then, and it does now, that to belong to a corps of officers created to provide a suitable man for every branch of the public service, from Governor-General to subaltern in a marching regi-

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ment, is something to be proud of. There is really no exaggeration in the above description of the elasticity of the Staff Corps, for the deviser of it—himself an officer in it—was actually, we know, offered (and refused) the Viceroyalty of India!

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But whilst in the *Calcutta Review* I was recommending my brother officers to choose the Staff Corps, I myself was sorely tempted to throw in my lot with those who might elect for service in one of the Indian British regiments which were henceforth to be incorporated in the Line. I actually forwarded an application to this effect to Army Headquarters. But I repented of my folly in time, and withdrew my application, feeling, on further reflection, that it would indeed be a backward step to become a subordinate officer in a Line Regiment after commanding a regiment like the Fifth for the last ten years, and winning the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel at its head.

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For some reason or other I was summoned whilst at Calcutta to a private interview with Lord Canning, then Viceroy, and he shortly afterwards offered me the command of what is, or was, called the "Bhopal Contingent." Probably some political duties went along with this command, which made it more desirable than the command of an ordinary local corps, and led Lord Canning to offer it to me; but I inquired into no particulars, and refused the offer absolutely. I was far too much wedded to a purely military career to exchange the command of a frontier regiment for that of a local corps in Central India, however advantageous the exchange from a monetary point of view.

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As soon as my self-imposed literary work was done, I was hot to return to the frontier, where there was

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a prospect of stirring times. The ever troublesome Wuzeeree tribe on the Dera Ismail Khan portion of the frontier had been placed, for persistent acts of hostility, under what is called on the frontier "blockade"; that is, they were rigorously excluded from British territory until their offence had been purged. This meant the stoppage of the petty traffic which they were accustomed to carry on, and found so profitable, with the frontier posts and villages. These "blockades" generally led to encounters, more or less serious, with the blockaded tribe, and demanded extra care and vigilance on the part of the troops. I was therefore pleased to be told to rejoin the Fifth at Kohat with all speed, and march with it to Dera Ismail Khan. There I was to assume command of the garrison and district, and control the blockade.

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I believe the system of blockades under which we worked when I was a frontier officer has been replaced now by a more humane and enlightened system of dealing with the independent frontier tribes. The old system was, I suppose, the natural outcome of the "masterly inactivity" idea which predominated so long in the minds of successive Viceroys and Local Governors. We—the frontier officers—were to be indifferent to making friends with our neighbours on the other side of the border, and were to keep them at arm's length. The frontier officers were expressly discouraged in my time from running any risk by exploring or holding intercourse with the people beyond the border. Often have Native officers and men of my own regiment offered to take me into the Terah hills with an assurance that they would be answerable for my safety; but knowing that such an adventure would be highly disapproved at Lahore, I was obliged to put all such offers resolutely on one side.

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The "frontier" in the neighbourhood of Dera Ismail Khan is an ideal one, not a mere fanciful line drawn upon a map, but a fairly continuous chain of low hills which commences at the Scinde frontier and runs due north and south. This chain is a distinct feature of the tangled and confused mass of mountains which separate India from Afghanistan. The theory of the "frontier" is that all up to the top of this outermost chain of hills belongs to us,—what is beyond, to the local tribes. At a greater or less distance from this chain of hills, according to the nature of the ground, we have constructed a line of small forts. They are about twelve miles apart, and each is garrisoned by small parties of Infantry and Cavalry. Constant Cavalry patrols from these forts keep the country under observation, and furnish reports to the supporting military station in rear, as, for instance, Dera Ismail Khan. Theoretically at least the system was, perhaps is, admirable; and if the patrolling was strictly done, no considerable body could pass through the chain of outposts without discovery and speedy report to the rear.

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"Blockades" work slowly, but generally in the end successfully. The blockading troops require to be kept well up to their work, and then such inconvenience is caused to the blockaded, and their petty traffic is so effectually stopped, that they have generally accepted our terms for the renewal of free intercourse. The blockade which I was set to enforce was no exception to the rule, and the Wuzeerees were readmitted after a time to renewed intercourse and trade.

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Dera Ismail Khan is an interesting portion of the frontier because every winter it is the scene of the immigration into British territory of the enterprising Afghan traders, known under the name of Powindas.

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The trade between Southern Afghanistan and India is almost exclusively in the hands of these men. The men are a fine manly race, as indeed they need to be; for they have to make their way from Afghanistan through various robber tribes until, at last, they debouch with their camels and families on the plain of the Derajât. As soon as they have reached the safety of British territory they spread themselves over the country at the foot of the hills to refresh their tired camels and recuperate generally. The families and weakly camels are then left, and the men with the stronger animals spend the next months in traversing the Punjab and Upper India to trade in the delicious fruits and other products of Afghanistan. When summer ends they return to the frontier, and, collecting their families and animals, retrace their way to their own country. I have met these men as far from the frontier as Calcutta, and have astonished them by the usual salutation of Pushtoo wayfarers, "*Stirray-ma-shay*," "May you not be tired!"

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The troops at Dera Ismail Khan, at the time to which the preceding notes refer, were—one regiment of Punjab Cavalry and two of Infantry, one Field Battery, and two Companies of British Infantry detached from one of the regiments at Rawul Pindee: in fact, a Brigadier-General's command. The whole of these troops were under my command as being the senior officer, though I was then only a lately promoted Lieutenant-Colonel. One of the advantages we frontier officers derived from the exceptional position of the Force, as being outside the authority of the Commander-in-Chief, was that the senior officers often fell into positions far beyond our modest army rank. Thus, not only did I at Dera Ismail Khan command a numerically large force, as stated above, but I had the further responsibility of a

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disturbed frontier more than a hundred miles long. Thus the opportunity was afforded me, at a comparatively early age, of practising the higher duties of the profession. I used my opportunity to have frequent free brigade drills of all arms, for which the desert about Dera Ismail Khan afforded every facility. I thus acquired a readiness in handling the three arms, and an acquaintance with cavalry and artillery tactics which, in the ordinary course, only comes to an English officer when he has served twice as long as I had.

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By the time to which the preceding notes refer, all the regiments of the Force, which in 1857–8 had assisted in restoring peace to India, had returned to their ordinary duties on the trans-Indus frontier. It was therefore possible to meet again comrades of the three Arms who, having trained their regiments with a view to meet a very different foe on the frontier, had had to lead them against our own Sepoys at Delhi and Lucknow. Needless to say we were proud to know that the *prestige* of the Force had been greatly raised by the events of the last three years. If our brethen of the regular Sepoy army had once viewed us with pity as condemned to permanent service on a frontier scantily provided with what makes service pleasant in an ordinary Indian station, the tables were turned now, and our lot was regarded as enviable. Many of our officers had gained distinction in the course of the Mutiny. Neville Chamberlain, always in our eyes an ideal commander for such a Force as ours, had gained increased respect and honour by his acknowledged influence throughout the siege of Delhi, no less than by his prowess in actual fight. John Coke, my mentor when I first joined the Force, had distinguished himself at the head of the 1st Punjab Infantry and other more responsible commands. Wilde,

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who was subordinate to me in the frontier affair of Narinjee in 1857, had been badly wounded in Lord Clyde's final operations at Lucknow. "Sam" Browne had returned *minus* an arm, but *plus* a Victoria Cross. Two other crosses had been won by subalterns of the Force, Lieutenant Probyn, now General Sir Dighton Probyn, a trusted personal servant and friend of our King, and Lieutenant (now General Sir) John Watson. With not less pleasure than we renewed acquaintance with returned British comrades did we meet again many of our Native officers and men who had distinguished themselves in India. One Native officer, Gokul Sing, of the 4th Punjab Infantry, had obtained honourable mention by name in Lord Clyde's dispatches. Indeed, our Native officers were always highly valued by us. We found them trusty supporters in fight, and often profited by their experience and shrewdness in council.

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When my regiment's term of service at Dera Ismail Khan expired, I was sent (1862–3) in course of relief to Kohat, where I assumed command of a garrison numerically larger than that at the first-named station. It was in the autumn of 1863 that the important campaign of Umbeyla was added to the roll of our frontier wars, and in its progress afforded us many useful lessons.

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The composition of the Fifth was at this time what it had been for many previous years:—

2 Companies of Sikhs.
2 „ of Punjab Mohammedans.
1 Company of Dogras.
2 Companies of Pathans from within and beyond the border.
1 Company of all the foregoing and a few Hindoostanees.

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CHAPTER VII

The Umbeyla Campaign, 1863

1863–8

MENTION has been made in these notes of the curious colony of Hindoostanees which had established itself at Sitana, a village in the independent Pathan country west of the upper course of the Indus, in about the latitude of Peshawar, and at the foot of one of the spurs of the lofty mountain known by the Sanscrit name of Mahabun, i.e. great forest. On the frontier we spoke of this Colony as the "Sitana fanatics," and the story was that the colony originated in a few Mohammedans who had fled from justice in India. Other refugees joined this colony from time to time, and it was further recruited by Indian fanatical Mohammedans whose one idea was to preach a *Jihâd* against the Feringees. How these men came to be allowed to settle at Sitana it is not easy to understand; for there is no affinity between the Mohammedan of India and the Pushtoo-speaking mountaineer of the trans-Indus country. We may presume that the fanatical hatred of the Feringee preached by the new-comers fell upon willing ears when heard by the bigoted and ignorant Pathans. The fact remains that, in process of years, emissaries from the Sitana colony were welcomed by most of the neighbouring tribes, who liked their ravings against the Feringees, and were glad of their help in their petty raids and tribal disputes. The fanatics were known to have influential supporters in India, and to receive supplies of money from them,

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a fact which, of course, did not lessen their popularity with their greedy Pathan patrons.

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As an old frontier officer who has more than once been in personal contact with men of this fanatical band, their curious and adventurous history has always interested me. It begins as far back as 1824, when one Syud Ahmed, of Bareilly, in North-west India, a man of much learning and repute among his co-religionists, returned to India, by way of Kandahar, Kabul, and Peshawar, from the orthodox pilgrimage to Mecca. His original sanctity as a Syud, or direct descendant of the Prophet, was greatly increased by his pilgrimage, and he was readily listened to by the ignorant and superstitious Pathans of Peshawar and the surrounding hills when he began to preach a "Jihâd," or Holy War, against the infidel, and to profess to work miracles. It was a good time for a cunning peripatetic saint like the Syud to make an impression, for the Pathans were smarting under a crushing defeat lately inflicted on them by Runjeet Sing, and under the oppressive government he had imposed upon them. Numbers flocked to the Syud to join in the "Jihâd," and he soon had a formidable if undisciplined army at his disposal. He then formed the ambitious idea of dislodging the Sikh garrison from the fort of Attock, which by controlling the passage of the Indus enabled Runjeet Sing to pour troops into the Peshawar Valley at will. The value of Attock as controlling the route between the Punjab and Peshawar was felt, it will be remembered, in 1857, and the first military movement ordered when the news of the Meerut outbreak reached Peshawar was to send my regiment from Kohat to Attock to expel the garrison of mutinous Sepoys.

The Syud's attempt to take the fort of Attock was, however, beyond his strength. The Sikhs were able

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to put an army into the field against him, and gave him a crushing defeat. The Syud had to fly, and took refuge for a time amongst the tribes of Swat and Bonair. Strange to say, partly by his gift for intrigue and partly by a series of dashing exploits, he contrived to regain his influence in the Peshawar Valley, and to become as important as before. This time, however, his exactions, and his interference with their customs, so irritated the Pathans, that they would have no more of him ; and but for his faithful Hindoostanee followers, who numbered by this time 1,600 men, things would have gone hard with him. As it was, he was able to lead his Hindoostanees safely across the Indus, and again to attract a large following of the simple Pathans. But the Sikhs were now fully alive to the necessity of crushing him for good and all. They sent a large Force against him, and though his Hindoostanees fought with great courage, and three times beat back the Sikh regiments, the disparity of numbers was too great, and all but about 300 were annihilated. These 300 found their way to Sitana, a village on the right bank of the Indus, and there formed the nucleus of a nest of fanatics which harassed the Sikhs for years, and which since the annexation of the Punjab has constantly added to our difficulties in dealing with the independent tribes on the Eusufzye and Hazara frontiers.

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Not that the strong hand of the Indian Government has not, times and again, been put out to crush the wasps' nest of implacable fanatics. In 1852 Colonel Mackeson, of frontier renown, crossed the Indus from Hazara with a Force largely composed of Irregulars and levies, and expelled them from a fort they had constructed near Sitana, on one of the spurs of the Mahabun. He spared their actual settlement at Sitana in the hope that after their ignominious flight from their fort they would have lost all

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credit with their Pathan friends, and would not have been allowed to resettle. When subsequently they had re-established themselves and resumed their evil practices, General Sir Sydney Cotton, in 1858, expelled them a second time and destroyed Sitana, and also an outpost which they had built in a southern spur of Mahabun. The result was always the same. Popular with the Pathan tribes because, besides having plenty of money, they were useful auxiliaries in their raids on British territory, they were welcomed back after each expulsion, and no engagement not to receive them taken by us from the tribes was effective after our troops were withdrawn.

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The presence and influence of these fanatics had been detected in the disturbances on the Eusufzye frontier in the early days of the Mutiny, when some of them had fought in the two affairs of Narinjee, as related in an earlier note.

They were regarded by the British officials at Peshawar as a constant menace to the peace of the frontier, and as a sore to be got rid of on the first favourable occasion. In the autumn of 1862 I had spent some weeks with General Chamberlain at Murree in obtaining the best available Native information about the fanatics, and the easiest way of reaching them; but it was not until the following year, 1863, that the assent of the Supreme Government was obtained to an expedition which should be strong enough not only to extirpate a handful of pestilent Hindoostanees, but to do it in spite of the resistance of formidable tribes whose hostility and opposition had to be reckoned with.

Unlike any previous frontier expedition conducted by General Chamberlain, it was determined that, in view of the likelihood of combined tribal resistance, the expedition should be strengthened by two regi-

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ments of British Infantry, and the 71st Highland Light Infantry and the 101st Royal Bengal Fusiliers, one of the Indian regiments lately added to the Line, were accordingly lent by the Commander-in-Chief. Three regiments of the regular Native Army were also lent by the Commander-in-Chief, in order not to withdraw from their regular frontier duties too many regiments of the Frontier Force. These regiments were the 14th Sikhs, the 20th Punjab Infantry and the 32nd Pioneers. General Chamberlain would perhaps have dispensed with the British regiments had it been prudent; for he knew how greatly their requirements would swell the encumbrances of the expedition. In the result the presence of the two regiments was most useful on two critical occasions.

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The expeditionary Force was collected with as little ostentation as possible at various points in Eusufzye, and a final start was made from Camp Nowakilla on the night of October 19. The intention was to penetrate into the Chumla Valley by what is known as the Umbeyla Pass, and thence to force the Hindoostanees back into British territory. It was believed that this route, though it led perilously near the country of the formidable Bonair tribe, offered the fewest obstacles to the onward march to Sitana; and it was anticipated that the Force, having achieved its object, would be quickly back in British territory.

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The difficulties of the pass were, however, found to be so great, even for the march of troops, that in view of the certain delay to the loaded animals, General Chamberlain decided, in the afternoon of October 20, to form camp at a point half a mile short of the Chumla Valley, and three miles short of the intended camping-place near the village of Umbeyla. The spot chosen was where the pass

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opened into a fairly level valley, with steep hills on the left and lower hills on the right. Little did we think that this position, taken up to shorten the march for the baggage animals, was to be our home for the next two months!

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Of all the situations which war creates there is none in which the gilt is more completely taken off the gingerbread, and the naked squalor of war revealed, than when an army of 4,000 or 5,000 men, with all its *impedimenta*, has to find its way through a long mountain pass or defile. If it is one of the passes so common on the frontier, the road is probably the dry bed of a watercourse, strewn with great boulders and shut in on both sides by rugged hills. The roadway—never very broad—narrows at places to a few yards: lucky if occasionally a small Niagara is not met with in the shape of a perpendicular waterfall six or seven feet deep. If such a pass has to be traversed by a Force of 4,000 or 5,000 men, equipped for a campaign, with spare ammunition and commissariat stores, the confusion in rear of the troops can hardly be conceived. The transport animals are, perhaps, of every kind, from the elephant to the humble donkey; whilst the loads are of every variety, from the neat mule ammunition box to the unwieldy tent of the British soldier. The baggage, which probably arrived at the defile on a broad front, is soon narrowed by the increasing difficulty of the road to a frontage of a single loaded animal. Every leader of an animal or animals strives to force his particular animal to the front, and thus adds to the inevitable jam. It hardly requires the active presence of an enemy to make the confusion almost hopeless. The wonder is that the crowded mass does eventually extricate itself, and arrives in camp when it ought to be starting for the next march.

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Something like this was the state of things which prevailed in the Umbeyla Pass on October 20, 1863. The mountain batteries were just able to keep in touch with the Infantry, but it was 10 p.m. before the half battery of field artillery which accompanied the Force reached General Chamberlain's bivouac. The baggage was hopelessly delayed, and only commenced to trickle into camp on the morning of the 21st. The pass had never been seen by any European, but a description of it had been obtained from Natives who claimed to be familiar with it. The tendency of information derived from Natives in matters of this kind is to minimize difficulties, their ideas being almost always derived from the experience of single horsemen or foot travellers. So it was found in the present case, and the plan of campaign which had been fixed upon beforehand was completely altered by the necessity of shortening the first march, in consequence of the difficulty of the road to the baggage animals. The enforced halt, close to the entrance of the country of the warlike Bonair tribe, gave time to the tribesmen to attack us in all their strength, and to summon to their assistance all the restless spirits of more remote tribes. It also entirely prevented the intended *coup de main* upon the Sitana colony, and in the end led to our running a tremendous risk in order to effect the object of the expedition. One does not like to think of the misfortune which might have befallen us if the men of Bonair, by whose hands we eventually destroyed the Sitana colony, had played us false, and turned upon the three or four hundred men of the Guide Corps, whose perilous duty it was to see that they performed their engagement.

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The intelligence received in camp during the halt of October 21 was to the effect that the onward march of the Force was likely to be strenuously opposed

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by the Bonair tribe, and that we should probably be attacked in the chance position we had taken up whilst awaiting the arrival of the baggage and rear-guard. General Chamberlain, therefore, made the required arrangements for defence. The left of the camp was dominated by the Gurroo Mountain, 6,000 feet high, on the other side of which lay the Bonair country. The spurs of the Gurroo came right down to the camp, and offered favourable situations for defensive pickets. Points of vantage were also found in front and on the right of the camp, and were occupied accordingly. The general charge of the left pickets was assigned to me, and those to the front and right to my old friend and comrade, Wilde. This arranged, we stood prepared for what might happen.

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It naturally caused some surprise that Neville Chamberlain, a past-master in Indian mountain warfare, who had previously conducted several expeditions of the same kind with uniform success, should be thus checked at the outset of an enterprise which offered no very novel feature, and when the force which he commanded was unusually strong both in numbers and composition. In none of his former expeditions had he had so much as a single company of English soldiers ; now he had two British regiments, and a half battery of British Artillery. The fact that the Eusufzye Field Force was composed partly of British soldiers goes some way to explain the cause of the initial failure. It was an old idea in India that the British soldier must be provided with certain conveniences and comforts which prohibit rapid movement in a mountainous country. How the necessity for the lightest scale of baggage failed to obtain consideration before the expedition started has never been explained satisfactorily. Those excellent officers, Colonels Hope and Salisbury, would, I am sure, have accepted for their regiments any limitation of public

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or personal baggage the General thought desirable. General Chamberlain, accustomed to make war with his own frontier regiments, whose baggage is limited by the strictest order, must have strangely forgotten how differently his force was now composed. I myself saw amongst the baggage of one regiment a gaily painted Indian palankeen—a vehicle much in favour for mess purposes on the line of march in India! It was slung upon an elephant, and came into camp on the 21st October amongst other belated baggage, to General Chamberlain's great displeasure. This recalls stories heard during the South African war of the strange encumbrances carried by some of the flying columns, and goes far to explain the block in the Umbeyla Pass and the untoward halt short of the Chumla Valley.

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No doubt General Chamberlain was considerably handicapped in the early part of the campaign by the necessity impressed upon him by his political officer, my old friend Reynell Taylor, of not giving the alarm prematurely to the frontier tribes. Precaution to this end was carried to such an excess that not only was the General entreated not to join the force he was to command until the last moment, but notice of the object of the expedition, and of its being in no way directed against the Bonair tribe, was not sent out until the very day that the troops marched, when it was quite impossible it could be received in time to do any good. It is fair to the general to mention these extenuating circumstances, but they do not relieve him altogether of blame for not having taken his measures better.

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The position which the force had almost accidentally taken up was not an unfavourable one for defence. It effectually covered the communications to the rear; and whilst it had fairly level and open ground

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to the front, its flanks could be adequately protected. On the left, as already said, the Gurroo mountain rose to a height of 6,000 feet, and when its descending spurs were held in sufficient force, the side from which attack was most to be apprehended was secure. The hills on the right of the camp were lower, but offered several good positions for defensive pickets. The principal picket on this side of camp we christened "the Crag," and its possession was a constant bone of contention between us and the enemy. It was three times taken by the enemy and retaken by us, twice by the imposing aid of one or other of the two British regiments in camp. The pickets on the Gurroo mountain were vehemently attacked very early in the campaign, but successfully beat off the assailants, inflicting such heavy loss upon them that the attack was never seriously repeated; and a later rearrangement of the camp permitted the pickets on the Gurroo to be withdrawn altogether.

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Things were fairly quiescent in camp from the 20th till the 24th October, and the days were utilized to weed out and send to the rear all encumbrances that could be dispensed with. On the 22nd, however, a reconnaissance made towards the Chumla valley was so vigorously opposed by the enemy as to leave no doubt of their temper, and of the resolute way in which they meant to bar our further advance. Our information led the general to expect a simultaneous attack both on the left and on the front on October 25. The front attack duly came off on the 25th, but was effectually repelled by the officers charged with the defence on that side—notably by Major C. P. Keyes, of the 1st Punjab Infantry. The attack on the left was postponed by the enemy till the 26th, and the General had prepared for it by largely reinforcing the pickets on the Gurroo.

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When the attack came, I had with me on the mountain, besides the ordinary pickets, 200 men of the 71st Highland Light Infantry, thirty marksmen of the same regiment and of the 101st Royal Bengal Fusiliers, the Hazara Mountain Battery, and the 5th and 6th Punjab Infantry.

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Before relating the attack of the 26th, I must remark that these notes are not a history of the Umbeyla campaign, but are only concerned with as much of it as I personally shared in. It would take me far from my purpose if I were to attempt to describe the many brilliant exploits performed by our troops and officers in the defence of the front and right of our position during our protracted detention at the mouth of the Umbeyla Pass. Some day it is to be hoped that an historian may be found who will relate in detail such exploits as the first retaking of the Crag picket by Majors Keyes and Brownlow; and how Colonel Salisbury, of the 101st Foot, and other gallant officers retook it when captured by the enemy a second time. When it was again lost for the third time I had a personal share in retaking it, as I shall relate in due course. It must be remembered that the camp occupied a very extensive area of ground. From the spur of the Gurroo Mountain, 1,000 feet above the camp which was my post and which I never quitted during the four weeks that we held the mountain, I commanded a bird's-eye view extending far; but many important events took place on the front and right which were not only unseen by me but of which only very indistinct accounts reached me at the time. With this explanation I return to the events of October 26.

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It was easy to see when the morning of the 26th broke, that the undelivered attack of the day before upon our left was only postponed and not abandoned.

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The Gurroo was seen to be crowded with tribesmen and banners. The reinforcements which the general had sent me the day before were quickly in position to receive the coming attack. The 5th Punjab Infantry in extended order faced the descending ridges of the mountain, with the battery on its right. The 6th Punjab Infantry was formed in reserve. The principal picket on this side—called "the Eagle's Nest"—was strengthened to thirty marksmen of the two British regiments, and eighty men of the 20th Punjab Infantry. In some rocks at the foot of the picket was posted a strong supporting party of mixed British and Sepoy marksmen. Both picket and support were encouraged by the presence of Major Brownlow commanding the 20th Punjab Infantry, who at the first sound of the firing, and without waiting for orders, reinforced the picket by two companies of his regiment. The first demonstration of the enemy was against the skirmishers of the Fifth, but they were deterred from coming to close quarters by the intervention between them and us of a tolerably open valley, in crossing which they would be exposed to the fire of both guns and rifles. They contented themselves, therefore, with directing a continuous but not very effective fire upon our position. My desire was to draw them on, but it was foiled by the unexpected conduct of the officer commanding the 6th Punjab Infantry. This officer, actuated by some unaccountable impulse, suddenly led his regiment in quarter distance column, from its position in reserve, right down from the high ground we were occupying into the valley which separated us from the enemy. Every effort was made to arrest this unfortunate movement, but without avail, and it seemed better to let it proceed to its natural termination than to arrest it almost at the moment it must come into contact with the enemy. It only remained to provide

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against the almost certain result of an attack so imprudently conducted. The quarter distance column was quickly thrown into confusion by the difficulties of the ground, before its leading files reached the tribesmen. In the confused single combats which followed—bayonet against tulwar—the superiority was with the tulwar; and it only remained to cover the inevitable retreat. A company of the Fifth descended from our position into the valley in skirmishing order, and, aided by the fire of the Enfields of the 71st, prevented the tribesmen from following up their advantage.

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After this mortifying repulse of an attack which should never have been made, the elated enemy, avoiding the comparatively open ground between our position and theirs, made a violent attack upon Major Brownlow in the Eagle's Nest picket. General Chamberlain has described this picket as "occupying the top of a very steep rocky knoll which rises out of the southern face of the Gurroo, and is the apex of that portion of the mountain which overlooks the left flank of the camp." The knoll had been roughly prepared for defence the previous day: I have in a previous note related how it was garrisoned. Two very determined attacks were made upon this picket in the course of the day; but they were successively repulsed by the steady fire of the garrison directed by Major Brownlow, and many dead and wounded tribesmen were left upon the ground. In the intervals between these attacks, and until late in the evening, the tribesmen kept up a continuous fire both upon the Eagle's Nest and upon the main position. Their attitude till late in the day was still so threatening, that I felt it impossible to withdraw the troops at nightfall as my instructions directed; and, with General Chamberlain's approval, the troops remained in position all night. Contrary

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to expectation, the night passed without a renewal of the attack.

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The experience of the last two days convinced General Chamberlain that we were faced by a general combination of the frontier tribes, determined to resist our advance to Sitana. He therefore decided to fortify his present position and to allow the tribes to shatter themselves against his defences, if such were their will, convinced that the time would come when the combination would collapse, and he would be able to deal unopposed with the Sitana fanatics.

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During the three weeks which followed the determined attack of the 26th, I remained at my post on the Gurroo Mountain in charge of the left defences. Attack was constantly threatened by the horde of tribesmen who, after their repulse on the 26th, established themselves permanently on the upper slopes of the mountain; but they never could screw themselves up to another serious attack. Their prolonged inaction became so marked that General Chamberlain ventured on a rearrangement and concentration of the camp, in which all troops were withdrawn from the Gurroo and placed so as to strengthen the defences on the front and right of the position. The actual withdrawal was a delicate operation in the face of an enemy so alert and active as the Pathans of Bonair, who had by this time been largely reinforced from the more distant tribesmen of Bajour and Koonar. I look back upon it now as one of the most interesting and responsible services I have had to perform.

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For some days previous to this change of position everything that could be spared was sent down from our position on the Gurroo to the camp below.

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It was not without some misgivings that the troops on the mountain, which had been reduced to one mountain battery, 200 of the 71st, and my own regiment, the 5th Punjab Infantry, saw the mountain battery march out of the defences. The gradual removal of all encumbrances had been conducted with such secrecy—chiefly at night—that we had reason to hope it had not been noticed by the enemy from their post of vantage above us. Still, there was no certainty that the intended withdrawal was not known to our enemy, and that we should not be attacked at that most critical moment when everything favours the attackers. So it was with some anxiety that on the night of November 17 we awaited the General's final orders for our withdrawal. The orders reached me at 10 p.m. and were quietly communicated to all concerned. The pickets, of course, were to stand fast till the last moment. The two companies of the 71st were to move out at the first dawn of day, and quietly descend the mountain. The Fifth was to follow, prepared to resist to the utmost any attempt to trouble the retirement. These arrangements duly made known, we lay down for the last time on the mountain side to get what sleep we could before the day should break.

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At earliest dawn I gave the signal for the 71st to commence the descent, and when I judged them to be sufficiently far advanced, two companies of the Fifth followed, the Native officer in command being ordered to halt and extend when he had descended 200 yards from our defences. As soon as the first two companies were in position they were followed by two more companies with orders to halt and extend 200 yards in rear of the first two. The relief was great when I knew these four companies to be in position. The remaining companies of the Fifth

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then moved out of our defences, and followed the rough track we had constructed to the camp below. The two lines of skirmishers, alternately passing through each other, covered the movement of the main body to the foot of the mountain. Nothing occurred during the descent to indicate that the enemy were aware of what was in progress; and it was not until the opportunity for troubling our retirement had passed that our glasses showed us the tribesmen cautiously approaching our deserted defences, and evidently suspicious that a trick was being played upon them.

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The "Eagle's Nest" picket, so stoutly held on October 26 by Brownlow and his men, stood fast under Lieutenant C. E. Stewart,[1] the Adjutant of the Fifth, until that officer saw the line of skirmishers nearest him about to move. Stewart then led the pickets straight down the hill, and rejoined his regiment at the bottom. We then knew for the first time that our General had made our retirement as safe as he could by placing the guns of Captain Griffin's Field Battery in position to sweep the mountain.

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As we crossed some comparatively level ground to the new position assigned us, I remember we passed a tent, the kind-hearted inmate of which insisted upon giving me and the officers with me a most welcome cup of tea, and thereby earned our eternal gratitude: for the anxiety of the last twenty-four hours had not been small, and the scramble down the mountain was highly provocative of thirst. Moreover, the perpetual scrambling for the last month over the rough Bonair hills had revived an old hurt received in the Mutiny days, and I was altogether in somewhat dilapidated plight. It was

[1] Now Colonel Stewart, C.B., C.M.G., C.I.E.

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with anything but pleasure, therefore, that on arriving at the new camp I was greeted by an order for the Fifth to march at once, and do a day's work with pick and spade on the outlying defences of the position. It needs not to tell how grateful was the rest of the night which followed, though sleep was somewhat disturbed by the incessant fire kept up by the enemy upon our pickets.

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The withdrawal of the troops which had so far held the slopes of the Gurroo enabled the General to extend and improve his position on the lower heights, which had formed our line of defence to the right front. The position was henceforth practically divided into two unequal parts, forming an upper and a lower camp. The upper camp was in immediate proximity to, and in support of, the Crag picket, our most important and most advanced defence. Between it and the main camp was a space of tolerably open ground, which made communication between the two camps easy. The upper camp was placed under me, and was largely composed of the troops withdrawn from the Gurroo. The abandonment of the Gurroo led the enemy to suppose that the whole Force was in retreat, and they consequently made a fierce attack upon the front defences of the camp later in the day. The next day they fired heavily all day against the Crag and Water pickets, and the Crag was heavily pressed during the whole night, but was stoutly and successfully defended by Major Brownlow, who had with him 100 of the 101st, and 100 of the 20th Punjab Infantry. Major Brownlow was relieved on the morning of the 20th by parties of the same strength of the 101st and 1st Punjab Infantry, under command of Captain Delafosse, one of the two British officers who survived the massacre of the Cawnpore garrison in 1857. The fire was hot and continuous through-

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out the forenoon of the 20th, but slackened after twelve o'clock, conveying the impression that the tribesmen were disheartened. So confident did Major Brownlow, with whom I consulted, and I feel of this, that I sent a note to the General asking his permission to take the offensive, and clear the enemy from the front of our position. I was completely mistaken. Whilst Brownlow and I were anxiously waiting the General's reply, a peculiar and sinister noise struck our ears, followed by the rattle of stones and clouds of dust from the Crag picket. The dust was caused by a confused mass of animals, followers, and a few soldiers coming headlong down the craggy hillside. The meaning of this was not for a moment doubtful. The picket had for the third time given way to an overwhelming rush of the tribesmen!

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Of course the whole camp stood to arms at once, in expectation that the capture of the picket would be followed by a vehement attack upon the camp; but it was not so. The tribesmen were satisfied with the success they had gained, and contented themselves with such small plunder as the picket afforded, varied by the mutilation, Pathan fashion, of the bodies of the slain.

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What was happening at the Crag picket was seen by General Chamberlain at the main camp almost as soon as by us. In the space of a few minutes the General's orders reached me not to move, but to await the reinforcements he was bringing. In about a quarter of an hour he arrived, bringing the 71st Highlanders and the 5th Goorkah regiment. He directed Colonel Hope to lead his Highlanders straight up the rocky path which led to the captured picket, and told me to lead the 5th Goorkahs and my own regiment up the hill by a slight circuit, so

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as to take the enemy in flank and rear. No time was lost. The advance of the Highlanders under the leading of Colonel Hope was very imposing, and attracted the admiration of all who witnessed it. With equal spirit, but in less compact order, owing to the nature of the ground, the Goorkahs and my own regiment breasted the ascent and performed the task assigned them. It was a steep pull to the crags which gave the picket its name, but not for a moment was the issue doubtful. The united columns followed the flying tribesmen for about half a mile, the men burning to avenge the distressing sight of the mutilated bodies of the gallant defenders, British and Native, of the captured picket. When further pursuit was useless, the troops returned to the defences, the garrison of the restored picket for the night being furnished, at Colonel Hope's special request, by 200 men of the Highlanders. The discouragement of the tribesmen was, however, so great that not a shot was fired at the picket throughout the night, nor, I believe, ever after during the continuance of the campaign.

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General Chamberlain himself accompanied and directed the advance of the troops to recover the Crag picket. He retained me at his side to receive any further instructions which might be necessary till the picket was retaken. When about two-thirds of the ascent had been accomplished, the General was unfortunately struck by a bullet in the forearm. He, however, continued to direct the advance, and it was only when the victory was won that he was persuaded to return to camp, and have his wound attended to. It need not be said how we all deplored the mishap which had befallen our Chief, and how sincerely we hoped that his wound would not incapacitate him from retaining his command.

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About the same time that the General received his wound I was struck by a bullet fired from the direction of the water picket above mentioned. The sensation was as if someone had hit me a most violent blow across both thighs. The wound, though it bled freely, was happily superficial, and I was able to continue to lead my men till the two attacking columns were re-united half a mile beyond the Crag picket. Indeed, it was not till the next day that I consented to report myself wounded, the excessive stiffness of the limbs, and consequent inability to get about, making it obligatory on me to take a day or two off duty.

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General Chamberlain had now been held at bay for a month by the resistance of the combined tribes, and the Government was seriously alarmed. So far, under the anomalous arrangement in force, the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Hugh Rose, had had little part in the expedition beyond lending it the assistance of the two British and some Native regiments from the regular army, and receiving General Chamberlain's reports, for transmission to the supreme Government. This strange condition of things was consequent on the control of all military matters connected with the Punjab frontier, and of the Frontier Force, being vested nominally in the hands of the Viceroy, but really in those of the Punjab Government. Lord Dalhousie had so willed it for good reasons in 1850, to the great disgust of Sir Charles Napier, and the arrangement had continued without ill effect until 1863. Hostility or misbehaviour on the part of the frontier tribes had so far been successfully dealt with locally by means of the Frontier Force, and without publicity or disturbance of the general peace. The brigadier commanding had been specially selected, and the small frontier campaigns which had taken place in the preceding

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twenty years had always been successful. But the forces allied against us on this occasion were far in excess of what we had hitherto had to deal with, and the advice and active assistance of the commander-in-chief had become a necessity. Sir Hugh Rose was accordingly approached, and responded by sending two staff officers from Simla to take note of the actual situation. The two officers were, Colonel Adye, subsequently honourably known as General Sir John Adye, and Major, now Field-marshal Lord Roberts, our late Commander-in-Chief. I well remember the feeling, compounded partly of anger at what we thought implied a slight to our General, and partly of approving envy, with which we, in our soiled fighting dress, watched the trim uniforms and well polished boots of the two Simla emissaries, as they were conducted over the position!

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CHAPTER VIII

The End of the Umbeyla Campaign

THE prompt recapture of the Crag picket on October 20, and the evident inability of the tribesmen to obtain any material advantage over our troops created great discouragement among them, and particularly among the Bonair tribesmen, upon whom the brunt of the fighting had so far fallen. They desisted henceforward from any determined attack and confined themselves to an occasional interchange of shots with our pickets. General Chamberlain had been right in thinking that when the hostile tribes had shattered themselves a few times against our defences, they would acquiesce in our determination to punish the Sitana fanatics.

A period of inaction accordingly now set in, and the chiefs of the Bonair and other tribes approached the political officer with the force, with the object of coming to terms of peace. This was fortunate for us, as the General's wound proved more severe than we had hoped, and obliged him to apply to be relieved of his command, which was meanwhile exercised by the next senior officer, Colonel Wilde. The probability of the tribesmen ceasing to oppose our advance to Sitana was improved by a change which took place about this time in the political Staff of the General. Reynell Taylor was replaced by Major James, the Commissioner of Peshawar. That *preux chevalier*, Reynell Taylor, was too chivalrous and conscientious to be a successful negotiator

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with men of the stamp of our Pathan opponents. James was not only a man of sterner mould, but he was ready to fight them with their own weapons of cunning and artifice. For instance, we in camp, at least, credited him with artfully sowing distrust and suspicion amongst the tribesmen by contriving that letters should fall into their hands leading to the supposition that certain of their influential chiefs were in secret correspondence with the British authorities. At any rate the incessant attacks of the last four weeks ceased, and we enjoyed a period of comparative repose.

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This inaction of our enemies gave time for Sir Hugh Rose to act upon the information he had gained from Adye and Roberts, and to push forward much needed reinforcements. Two additional British regiments, the 1st Battalion Royal Fusiliers and the 93rd Highlanders, and three Native regiments, the 4th Goorkahs, the 3rd Sikhs and the 23rd Pioneers were put in orders to join the force. The General commanding the Peshawar division, Major-General J. Garvock, was directed to relieve our lamented general of his command. Early in December the reinforcements had joined, and a forward movement was ordered by General Garvock for December 10, but was countermanded at the request of Major James, as the chiefs of the hitherto most contumacious tribe, the Bonairs, had appeared in our camp and were apparently sincerely desirous of peace. The wish, however, was not shared by some of the later arrivals among the hostile tribesmen, the men of Bajour, Koonar, etc. Notwithstanding the willingness of the men of Bonair to submit, these remained recalcitrant; and on December 15, General Garvock moved out of the camp, where we had been so long detained, to attack them. His force consisted of two mountain batteries, two regiments

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of British and seven of Native Infantry. The story of the two days' operations which followed must be told by some future annotator, for I had no personal share in them. I was left in command of the 3,000 of all ranks detailed to protect the camp in the absence of the attacking column. It was mortifying that, having shared in the hardships of the earlier part of the expedition, I was not permitted a more active participation in its successful conclusion; but my two distinguished comrades, Brownlow and Keyes, were equally unfortunate. As it happened, we were not left in inglorious ease whilst our comrades were fighting outside; and Brownlow and Keyes had again the opportunity of adding to their previous exploits. But these notes of the Umbeyla operations have already run to an inordinate length, and I therefore content myself with transcribing the following paragraph from General Garvock's report to the Commander-in-Chief of what occurred in camp whilst he was engaging the enemy outside.

"Simultaneously with the attack on our left the camp was hotly assailed by a large body of the enemy. But the force left to defend it under that very excellent officer, Lieutenant Colonel Vaughan, well discharged its important duty. The enclosed report, marked No. 1, with its enclosure, will give the details, and I have therefore only to draw the special attention of the Commander-in-Chief to the distinguished gallantry of Major Keyes and of Lieutenant Unwin. A loss to the enemy of about eighty killed was the result of their vigorous onslaughts."

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The result of the two days' operations of the column under the personal command of General Garvock was that on the morning of December 17, the representatives of the several tribes still in arms against us tendered to Major James their uncondi-

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tional submission. It was accepted on terms, namely, that they should themselves go in force to Mulkah (which we found was the present particular stronghold of the Sitana fanatics) and then and there, in presence of a substantial detachment of the British Force, destroy it utterly. Hostages were taken that this should be done, and the safety of the British detachment (the infantry of the Guide Corps) and of Reynell Taylor, who accompanied as British Commissioner, should be assured. The following extract from a Field Force Order, dated December 23, 1863, issued by General Garvock, will be a fitting conclusion to this portion of my notes.

"CAMP, UMBEYLA PASS,
"*December* 23, 1863.

"The operations which commenced two months ago under Brigadier-General Sir Neville Chamberlain, K.C.B., have been brought to a victorious conclusion. The enemy has been completely beaten in the open field, and has acknowledged his defeat by unconditional submission, and unhesitating acceptance of the terms imposed on him by Her Majesty's Commissioner.

"He has himself, at our dictation, levelled Mulkah with the ground—the mountain stronghold of the Hindoostanee fanatics, which it was the primary object of the expedition to destroy.

"The Major-General congratulates the Force under his command on the brilliant termination of the campaign. He desires to convey his full appreciation of the gallantry and devotion of the troops."

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The praise thus accorded to the troops by the officer in immediate command was fully endorsed by the Commander-in-Chief and by the Government. But what I valued far more than any acknowledgment in higher quarters was the following paragraph

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in General Chamberlain's final dispatch on making over the command of the Force to General Garvock.

"I would next wish to bring to the Commander-in-Chief's notice the very meritorious conduct of the whole of the officers of the Force, from whom I have at all times received the most cordial support, and whose services I would beg to be allowed thus publicly to acknowledge. The officers whom I would particularly beg to notice are as follows. (Here follow the names of Colonels Hope and Wilde, and then my own.)

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"Lieutenant-Colonel J. L. Vaughan, Commandant 5th Punjab Infantry, who commanded the left defences from the time of the arrival of the Force in the Umbeyla Pass to its changing its position to the right heights with my confidence and approval. His conduct on the occasion of the attack by the enemy on the Eagle's Nest and pickets on the Gurroo Mountain was most favourably reported upon in my dispatch No. 4. After the change of position he commanded the upper camp, and his services were again mentioned in my report No. 8. He has at all times rendered me the most cordial assistance and support. I consider him a most intelligent officer."

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In face of the weary length to which the late South African war extended, the two months' campaign to which the foregoing notes relate seems almost trivial. Yet the discomfort—not to say hardships—endured by all ranks was worthy of the unstinted commendation it received from the Commander-in-Chief and the Government. I may mention that during the three weeks I spent on the Gurroo mountain in command of the left defences, we lived and slept daily under the open sky, without

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tents, and in constant readiness for and expectation of attack.

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I have given in a previous note the composition of the 5th Punjab Infantry, and shown how it contained in its ranks a large proportion of Pathans. Many of these were enlisted from beyond our border, and some of them were the brothers and kinsmen of the very tribes which were so strenuously opposing us. The other regiments of the Punjab Force serving with the expedition were very similarly composed, as was also Brownlow's regiment, the 20th Punjab Infantry. Yet not a single instance is known to me in which the ties of brotherhood proved stronger than those of discipline and of loyalty to the Government they served. On the Gurroo Mountain our pickets and sentries were constantly within speaking distance of the tribal outposts, and were constantly reproached by them for fighting against their kindred, and exhorted to desert and join them. But these appeals were invariably disregarded, and were met by counter-invitations to join our own ranks, and enjoy the benefits of British service. For years I had in the Fifth a Bonair non-commissioned officer, who a few months before the Umbeyla campaign took his discharge, greatly to my regret. On learning at his home in Bonair that his old regiment was marching on service, this man came to meet it, and begged me to reinstate him in the ranks, if only as a simple Sepoy. I would not allow him to rejoin in a lower rank than he had formerly held, but I kept him with me, intending, when opportunity offered, to reinstate him in his former rank. This man acted as my orderly throughout the operations, and was of the greatest service to me from his knowledge of the country and of the habits and feelings of his fellow-tribesmen. On several occasions he

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was employed by General Chamberlain to communicate with his countrymen, and to try and disarm their hostility by explaining how groundless were their suspicions as to the objects of the expedition. When at the end of the operations the troops returned to their several stations, I rewarded his loyalty by re-enrolling him as a non-commissioned officer.

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These Pathans from independent territory beyond our border have always been more or less freely admitted to service on the frontier regiments, but for obvious reasons they were not allowed to be too numerous. The regular pay is of course the principal inducement to them to enlist, because it gives them hope of soon saving enough money to obtain a desirable wife. Some have been known to enlist in order to escape the inconveniences of tribal blood feuds: some, of course, from sheer liking for change and adventure. But the most whimsical reason for seeking service with us was pleaded by an Afreedee in the early days of the Punjab Frontier Force. Coke's regiment, one of the most distinguished of the frontier regiments, had been hotly engaged in the early days of the Force with the Afreedees of the Kohat Pass. The next day a fine-looking young Afreedee presented himself to Coke, and asked to be enlisted in his regiment. Coke naturally demurred to enlisting a man of the tribe which had been fighting with us the day before, and asked what made him wish to take service with the enemies of his tribe. "Sir," said the Afreedee, "a thing happened to me yesterday which astonished me, who never yet missed a man at a hundred paces. I covered you twice yesterday with my matchlock, and both times I missed you! How can I be wrong in asking for service under a Sahib who is evidently so highly favoured by Allah?" The argument was irresistible.

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Coke took the Afreedee into his regiment, and in the course of years he rose to the highest rank and distinction possible to a soldier in one of our regiments, and long enjoyed the reputation of being first among the many distinguished Native officers of the Frontier Force.

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The Umbeyla campaign won for me the much coveted distinction of a Companionship of the Bath, and the award of a medal, with a clasp in addition, for general service on the North-West frontier.

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CHAPTER IX

Quiet Frontier Life

I DO not think that we, the humbler officers of the Umbeyla—or, as it was officially styled, the Eusufzye—Field Force quite endorsed the exultant language of General Garvock's despatch at the modified success we had obtained. It is true that we had effected, by the hands of our late enemies, the destruction of the home of the obnoxious colony of Hindoostanee fanatics at Mulkah; but the Force, as a force, had not penetrated into the unexplored recesses of the great Mahabun Mountain, and such success as we had achieved had been effected at what all felt to have been a very serious risk. Our new allies, the Bonair tribe, had no doubt given us important hostages for their good faith; but the small detachment which, with the chivalrous Reynell Taylor, had witnessed the destruction of Mulkah, had performed a task of no ordinary danger. There had been a moment when the tribe—the Amazais—in whose territory (and not in the Bonair lands) Mulkah lies, had threatened an opposition which only Taylor's great tact and firmness had overcome. The four days, therefore, which elapsed before Taylor and his companions and his escort of the Guide Infantry returned to camp, were spent by us in considerable anxiety, and the relief was great when they were all once more safe within our lines.

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After this the Field Force was broken up, and the troops dispersed to their several destinations. The Fifth received the route for Kohat, but I was privileged to accompany our wounded General as far as Nowshera, on his way to the sanatorium of Murree, with a view to render him some further assistance in putting into final shape his official dispatches. At Nowshera we found the Commander-in-Chief's camp on its way to Peshawar. I was received at Nowshera by Sir Hugh Rose with marked kindness as a trusted lieutenant of my General, and again a few days later at Peshawar. Peshawar was a sort of local London to us frontier officers; and the few days I spent there, on my way to rejoin the Fifth at Kohat, have left a most pleasant impression on my mind. The large garrison of European and Native troops afforded a great contrast to the smaller ones of our frontier stations, in which the red coats of British Infantry were hardly ever seen; and the luxury of a comfortable house, and above all of a well furnished bed, were very agreeable to a man who had slept for sixty-two nights upon the ground, and more often than not under the open sky!

Early in 1864 I rejoined the Fifth at Kohat, which place was to be my home through that and the following year. Kohat—of which I have said something in a previous chapter—stands at the eastern end of a long and narrow valley, the northern side of which forms the boundary between British territory and the country of the independent Afreedee tribe. The valley is totally unlike anything I have ever seen in India proper, or in the Punjab, its features being European rather than Indian. It is highly cultivated in most parts, and in the spring months, when the crops are green and the trees in their first verdure, it is extremely pleasing to the eye of the English officer, accustomed to arid plains or tropical vegetation. A pretty stream—the Tochee—meanders through the

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valley and adds to its pleasing aspect. In 1850, when I first made acquaintance with Kohat, the ground occupied by the troops was a barren and stony elevation, chosen for military reasons. But in the fourteen years which had elapsed since 1850, houses had been built, trees planted, and gardens laid out, which gave it quite a different appearance. As the senior officer at Kohat, I found myself in command of quite an imposing force, consisting of one field and one mountain battery, a regiment of Cavalry, and three of Infantry. The field-days of such a force could be made both attractive and instructive. I planned them carefully beforehand, in consultation with the senior officers of each arm, and thus acquired an aptitude in combining the different arms which made me, at an age when English officers have rarely exercised a command superior to that of a regiment, a tactician of some skill and readiness. Our field-days were generally carried on in the open country, of which there is any amount in the neighbourhood of Kohat, and were made as instructive and as little irksome as possible to both officers and men. I have often thought how glad would many of our officers in the South African war have been if they had enjoyed a similar opportunity of overcoming the first difficulties of a varied command.

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Kohat enjoyed one advantage not possessed by the other stations of the Punjab Field Force, in that it was within what frontier officers considered easy distance of Murree, a pleasant sanatorium situated in one of the lower ranges of the Himalayas. True, to reach Murree from Kohat required a preliminary ride of 100 miles to Rawul Pindee; but as most of us (as I have said) possessed what the late Lord Lawrence was reputed to have called "a frontier behind," this gave us little concern. From Rawul Pindee the journey to Murree, though

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still performed on horseback, was short and easy. I know nothing more enjoyable than the gradual ascent from the stifling atmosphere of the plains of the Punjab in summer, to the delightful coolness of Murree. A feeling of renewed youth and elasticity comes over you with every 500 feet you ascend; and the pleasant scenery and the sight of snow-clad mountains, add greatly to the enjoyment. I was accustomed, like the other Kohat officers, to spend two months' leave annually accorded to us at Murree; and it was not until it became advisable, in view of ulterior military employment, to endeavour to become known to the Commander-in-Chief and army big-wigs, that I exchanged the modest pleasures of Murree for those of the more courtly and distant Simla.

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Although Kohat and the other stations of the Frontier Force were in the extreme backwoods of India we frontier officers took a lively interest in what was passing in England and Europe. I find constant proof of this in the letters I wrote to the different members of my family during my twenty years of frontier service, and particularly at this period—1865–8. These letters the near relations to whom they were addressed religiously preserved; and within the last few months they have come again into my hands—to be read with strange feelings of curiosity and interest. I give one or two specimens of our ideas on passing European events from letters written at the period at which these notes have now arrived :—

"KOHAT, *February* 16, 1866.

"We are all very sorry to see the latest accounts from America. How sadly the war has been turning of late against the Confederates! It really looks as if their cause was becoming hopeless. . . . Sooner or later it must, I fear, end in our going to war

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with America (the United States), and this long war will render it a very formidable antagonist. But what a war it will be! because we know what prolonged efforts England is capable of when once fairly roused, and the Northern States (indeed the Southern too) have shown just the same sort of tenacity which we pride ourselves on."

"BUNNOO, *October* 2, 1866.

"What do you think of the mighty event of the last few weeks on the Continent? I suppose you will on the whole rejoice that Prussia, as a Protestant country, has taken such a stride to the front. I grieve dreadfully over the mean position England now occupies on the Continent. We are, I fear, thoroughly hated and despised, and we deserve to be for that vile, selfish policy which forbids our standing forward, however great the wrong, for fear of possible injury to ourselves. Oh, it is a dreadful state of things, and Bright and his followers have a great deal to answer for."

"BUNNOO, *November* 19, 1866.

"How grievous English politics are now, and how sadly we seem to want a new set of public men to give things a healthy turn! It is curious how much we in India are able, as lookers-on, to see of the state of the game, and how wretchedly it appears to be played at present. We are sadly going down in the world as a nation, and I do not expect a change until you can get the whole machine re-set up. I thought it was the privilege of power to interest itself and interfere in all the great questions and events of the day; instead of which all the cry is the other way, and we seem to desire to waive all our just influence in the way the world wags. It is just the same in India: Russia doing all the work in Central Asia which it was essentially our place to do. Afghanistan suffering

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all the evils of anarchy, and we looking on, only anxious to keep aloof and not incur the faintest risk, when proper interference would be so greatly in the interest of humanity and civilization. It is a dreadful state of things, but is only carrying out home ideas apparently."

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As the number of officers with each of our regiments was small—often not more than three or four—we used at most of the stations to put our regimental messes into abeyance, and form one garrison mess instead. This made our evening gatherings more sociable and cheerful. A spirit of general friendliness and *esprit de corps* reigned amongst the officers, and we keep it up to this day, 1904, by an annual dinner in London, at which Lord Roberts—himself a frontier officer in virtue of his having at one period of his career commanded the Punjab Frontier Force—has more than once presided. At this annual dinner, generals and subalterns, both on the active and retired lists, meet on common ground, and exchange recollections and ideas. A weather-beaten crew the seniors are, and they afford a good example of the "survival of the fittest." The race of frontier officers at these dinners does not show signs of deterioration, and many of the younger officers are men who will probably one day have a name in frontier story.

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In 1866 I was invited by the Viceroy, Sir John (since Lord) Lawrence, at the suggestion of the Punjab Government, to write a military and political history of the frontier, containing an account of the various independent tribes of the frontier, and the military operations which had taken place against them since the annexation of the Punjab in 1849. I should have given the invitation a ready acceptance, but the conditions laid down were "so offensive and

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mortifying" (as I described them in a letter at the time) that I declined the task. I do not now remember what the terms were which gave me such offence, but I wrote very bitterly of them: "Sir John Lawrence does not understand the feelings of independent officers and gentlemen, and has been so used to deal imperiously with men who are dependent upon him, that he fancies every one will submit to be treated in the same way." And again: "Sir John wanted to make conditions, etc., such as a schoolmaster might have imposed upon a refractory boy who was sentenced to do a copy of verses for a punishment; and as I, on the contrary, felt that I was conferring an obligation in undertaking a very laborious task, I begged to be excused from undertaking it." I can believe now that the letter imposing the distasteful conditions was written by some underling of the Viceregal secretariat, and sent off unexamined, by his superior; and that my indignation against the Viceroy was quite unnecessarily excited.

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During the years to which the present notes relate I was frequently assigned the duty of examining officers as to their attainments in the Pushtoo language, for I was still the one officer in India who had established a claim to be considered a proficient in that language, though many, no doubt, knew it colloquially. The duty was pleasant enough when the examinees were such as I could conscientiously declare proficient; but the reverse when, as often happened, I had to remand them for further study. The value of a knowledge of Pushtoo was beginning to be recognized by the Indian Government; and at the present day I understand that officers desiring employment on the frontier are required to prove that they possess a knowledge of that language.

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I think it was about this time that, fired by the news of Gordon's wonderful exploits in China, I wrote to him asking him to accept me as a comrade in the task he was engaged in. His answer was quite congenial and encouraging, but further inquiries showed me that employment with Gordon was only possible if I resigned my own service. As this, of course, was not to be thought of, I had reluctantly to abandon the idea of associating myself with Gordon.

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Years were going on, and the end of my pleasant and instructive service on the frontier was perforce coming in sight. My early brevet of major for service in the Crimea, 1855–66, had been followed by a brevet lieutenant-colonelcy for the Mutiny, 1857–9. I should now soon be a "full" Colonel, and as such no longer eligible for my present modest command. The command of the Punjab Force, to which I might reasonably have aspired, had recently, and quite properly, been conferred on my friend Colonel Wilde. Unless I had the good fortune to be nominated to a brigade command in the regular army, I should be prematurely shelved, and my active military career would be closed before I was fifty. But how was I, whose whole service had been passed on the remote frontier, and, by a strange anomaly, not under the eye of the Commander-in-Chief, to obtain from the Head of the army recognition of my fitness for the higher military commands? This consideration determined me to pass my next annual two months' leave at Simla, and to try and make myself known to Sir William Mansfield, then Commander-in-Chief, and the official dispensers of army patronage.

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Acting upon these views of what my interests required, I started in May 1867 for two months' leave at Simla. It is amusing in 1904 to remember

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how difficult it was in 1867 to get from a frontier station like Bunnoo, where my regiment then was, to Simla. The following was my itinerary :—

Bunnoo to Dera Ismail Khan, on the Indus, about 60 miles on horseback.

Dera Ismail Khan to Dera Ghazee Khan, 200 miles lower down the Indus, by boat.

Dera Ghazee Khan to Mooltan, 30 miles, on horseback. Mooltan to Umritsur by railroad.

Umritsur to the foot of the Himalayas, at Kalka, by what was called "carriage dawk."

Kalka to Simla, on horseback for the third time.

The whole journey occupied ten days.

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It may be imagined how delightful the climate, and life generally at Simla, was to an old frontier officer like myself, whose greatest relaxation had for years been confined to an occasional visit to Peshawar, Murree, or Kashmir. How far the particular object which led me to undertake so long a journey was furthered, may be gathered from the following letter :—

"SIMLA, *July* 2, 1865.

"I have seen Sir John Lawrence, who was friendly enough, and Sir William Mansfield (the Commander-in-Chief), who was extremely civil to me. Simla is delightful. I shall be pleased, however, to be back at work again, for a life of idleness is not to my taste, except for a very short change."

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According to my laudable disclination for prolonged idleness, I found myself back at the frontier on August 15. A letter of August 18 records that "the journey back from Simla was a trying one, and the descent from those happy regions of coolness and beauty far from agreeable; but I braced my-

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self for the necessity, and got without accident to the end of my journey."

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I was not discouraged by the result of my first visit to Simla. I repeated it the following year, 1868, and had reason to think, after an interview with Sir William Mansfield, that my claims to future higher employment were quite admitted by him. I spent part of my leave in a walking excursion into the interior, with a party of which my friend Colonel Brownlow formed one. When still four marches from Simla, on our return from this pleasant and healthy way of spending our leave, a despatch from the Adjutant-General of the army met me, intimating that I was appointed to command a brigade in a field force then assembling for service against the hill tribes on the Hazara frontier. Need I say with what joy I received this intimation, or what haste I made to join my new command at Abbottabad? The utmost I had ever hoped for was that, when my rank made me no longer eligible for the command of a regiment, my having served for so long in a force not under the immediate orders of the Head of the Army would not be a hindrance to my being selected, in my turn, for one of the higher appointments in the gift of the commander-in-chief. And here was I, without solicitation on my part, appointed almost on the instant to the command of a brigade proceeding on service! I was indeed highly favoured, and was forthwith the object of warm congratulations from many friendly quarters. Before I could leave Simla I was commanded to an interview with Sir John Lawrence, who met me cordially, and talked about the approaching campaign, and also about the Umbeyla campaign of five years before. The hurried journey to Abbottabad need not be described. It was accomplished, as before, partly on horseback and partly by "carriage dawk" and railway. It was

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fatiguing enough at the season of the year, but fatigue was little recked of by a man who could describe himself, in letters of the time, as being "as strong as a horse, and able to walk and climb anything."

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CHAPTER X

The Expedition to the Black Mountain, 1868

1868–9.

ABBOTTABAD is the capital, if I may call it so, of the British frontier district known as Hazara. It enjoys the unique advantage amongst Indian military stations (excluding those actually in the Himalayas) of being 3,000 feet above the sea, and the climate is always agreeable. The brigade to which I stood appointed was the 2nd, and it was composed of the 1–6th Foot (the Warwickshire), the 2nd Goorkahs, and the 3rd Sikh Infantry—an ideal brigade for the service anticipated. The 1st Brigade was composed of the 1–19th Foot, the 1st Goorkahs and the 20th Punjab Infantry, the sister battalion of my own regiment, and still commanded by my old comrade, Major C. H. Brownlow. Another friend of mine commanded this brigade, Brigadier-General R. O. Bright of the 1–19th. I was well pleased with the appearance of the 1–6th. It had not been long in India, and the men had a somewhat washed-out appearance after the hot weather spent in the plains; but they were smart and cheery, and pleased at having been selected for active service. The 1–19th had the better physique of the two British regiments, which they owed to their having been employed through the summer in improving the road from Murree to

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Abbottabad, outdoor work in a hill climate. Captain J. G. Cockburn, of the Warwickshire, was my Brigade-Major, and Lieutenant W. S. A. Lockhart my Deputy Quarter-Master-General. The latter officer, of whom I shall have more to say in a future note, was known in subsequent years as an accomplished Staff officer, and an enterprising traveller in little known regions of Central Asia. He died as Commander-in-Chief in India, after having conducted to a successful issue, in the late nineties, the important expedition which opened to our knowledge the mysterious uplands and valleys of the Afreedees and Orukzyes.

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A word or two on the cause and object of the expedition we were about to start on, and of the country which was to be the scene of it.

The country was the sub-Himalayan mountainous tract called loosely the "Black Mountain," from its sombre and forbidding appearance. The "Black Mountain" is not, as might be supposed from the name, a single detached mountain, but a range, running north and south for twenty-five or thirty miles, parallel to the course of the Upper Indus. The average height of the range is 8,000 feet, with higher peaks at intervals rising to upwards of 9,000 feet. It throws out numerous spurs on both sides, those on the west descending to the banks of the Indus, those on the east ending in the British valley of Agror, or connecting on to other ranges lying north of that valley. The spurs are precipitous and rocky, and enclose deep glens, at the bottom and sides of which lie the villages of the tribes and the scanty cultivated patches which furnish them with food. The lower slopes of the range and of the spurs are covered with thorny bushes and grass, succeeded by trees as the ground rises; whilst the higher portions of

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both spurs and crest are clothed with magnificent pine forest.

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The tribes inhabiting this range are among the wildest and least civilized of the frontier; but none of them are of the importance or warlike character of the Afreedees or Orukzyes. Their favourite hunting ground is the British border valley of Agror, lying at the south-eastern foot of the range. The immediate *casus belli* in the present instance was an attack recently made on a police post in this valley, followed by sundry further outrages in the same locality, in the course of which some twenty British villages had been pillaged and burnt. Concurrently with these local disturbances a feeling of unrest was manifesting itself amongst many of the frontier tribes, according to official reports received from points far removed from the Black Mountain. An expedition, of which the tribes of the Black Mountain would be the first object, was accordingly recommended by the Punjab authorities. The Indian Government approved; but this time the mistake of Umbeyla was not repeated. The commander-in-chief, Sir William Mansfield, was applied to at first hand, and the number and composition of the expeditionary force was left to his discretion. It seemed good to Sir William Mansfield that the force employed should be of such strength as to overcome all possible resistance. He also, it is believed, thought it to be a good opportunity of giving the Native troops generally a taste of what hill fighting was; for experience of it had, so far, been too much confined to the troops of the Frontier Force. The latter, therefore, were for the most part left by Sir William Mansfield to their regular frontier duties, and the regiments to be employed were drafted chiefly from the stations of the Punjab and North-West. The total number of troops actually

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put into the field reached the large number of 12,000, with a reserve of 2,000 more at, or marching on, Rawul Pindee. Of this large Force, 8,000 men, with twenty-four guns, were collected in the Agror Valley for immediate operations; and one British and two Native regiments were directed to Derbund on the right bank of the Indus, at the south-west end of the Black Mountain. This last Force was intended to watch a probable hostile movement on the part of the trans-Indus Pathan tribes, or of the irrepressible Hindoostanee fanatics from the Mahabun mountain. Wilde, who was now commander of the Frontier Force with the rank of brigadier-general, was appointed to the chief command, with Brigadier-General Bright and myself as Brigadiers under him. The size of the force, which was by far the largest yet formed for operations against the independent frontier tribes, seemed to forbid the likelihood of much resistance from the peasant, though still formidable, population of the country about to be invaded.

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This anticipation proved correct, and the actual fighting which followed the attack of the Black Mountain may be described as almost *nil*. In fact, the campaign, after the first two days, which were occupied in forcing a way to the two highest peaks of the range, called respectively "Muchaie" and "Chittabut," resolved itself into a military-topographical promenade. Promenade though it was, nevertheless it was full of interest and instruction, and took us through a large tract of absolutely unknown country, to the great delight of the professional surveyors and map-makers who accompanied us. The Muchaie peak, supposed to be the highest of the whole range, was reckoned by the surveyors to be upwards of 9,000 feet. The view from it was magnificent. Many of the features

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so familiar to us in the Umbeyla campaign of five years before were recognizable from Muchaie. The Mahabun mountain, on a northern spur of which stood Mulkah, destroyed for us by our late enemies the men of Bonair in 1863, seemed from Muchaie almost within a stone's throw. The lofty Gurroo mountain, on which I had bivouacked for three weeks in 1863, towered farther to the west, and marked the position of our camp on the crest of the Umbeyla Pass. The conical hill and the Crag picket could be clearly made out, and, less distinctly, our glasses showed us the fort of Murdan, recalling to my mind the days of the Mutiny and the pursuit of the mutinous 55th. Our nightly bivouacks in the midst of pine forests, if cold, were not unpleasant; and our camp fires, fed by many a fallen monster pine, gave a pleasant fragance. An occasional shot broke the silence of the night, and reminded us that we were in an enemy's country.

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I found the men of the 6th Foot most cheerful and willing, but they compared unfavourably, in point of physique, as I have already noted, with the men of the 1–19th, who had spent the past summer in active manual labour in the Murree hills. The 6th, however, soon improved in physique in the healthy air of the mountain and the daily marching and climbing, and looked different men at the end of the three weeks the campaign lasted. The feeling in camp was that the campaign ought to have lasted longer, and that we should at least have traversed the entire crest of the range to its northernmost end; for the men of Thakot at the northern end were still contumacious. We also felt disappointed that an effort was not made, when the circumstances were so favourable, to read a final lesson to the irrepressible Hindoostanee fanatics, who had the insolence to plant themselves at the

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foot of one of the western spurs and defy us. Indeed, our irreverent youngsters merrily asserted that both our General and his political comrade were too anxious to rejoin their wives, who were watching the progress of the campaign at Abbottabad!

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Our General in his despatch said that after seeing the country on the western slopes of the Black Mountain he considered the enterprise of striking a blow at the 700 or 800 Hindoostanees, who were defying us on the bank of the Indus, to be not feasible. The camp critics, however, thought that inasmuch as a spur, which at least looked quite easy, led straight down from the Muchaie Peak to the village where the Hindoostanees had posted themselves, it would not only have been feasible but easy to deal them a blow; and the more so that the Derbund force on the other side of the Indus could have cut them off from taking refuge in the recesses of the Mahabun, which had so often saved them. As our general was not wanting in enterprise on occasion, the explanation probably is that by this time Government was frightened at the expense of keeping such an army in the field, and enjoined General Wilde to be content with the success already gained; and so this elusive band was allowed to escape once more. We know now that when the Hindoostanees found that most of the Black Mountain tribes had submitted, and that the rest did not want their assistance, they sought and obtained shelter once more near their original settlement at Sitana.

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After we had held the Muchaie peak and the crest of the range for ten or twelve days, the political officer with the force was able to tell General Wilde that the tribes generally had made submission, and

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that the objects of the expedition had been sufficiently attained. The only mark of submission, however, which we in camp were permitted to discern, was that certain representative men of the tribes with which we were at war accompanied the force, on its march back to British territory, as hostages for the correct behaviour of the tribes whilst we were in their country. Indeed, the political officer frankly avowed that he relied entirely upon the moral effect produced by our manifest ability to enter and stay in their most difficult country whenever we chose. Any retribution for the misdeeds which had led to the expedition, in the shape of fines or surrender of criminals, was, as many of us thought weakly, not demanded.

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So after a few days' occupation of the Black Mountain the force descended into the neighbouring valleys of Tikaree and Nundihar; and in a few days more, after traversing a considerable amount of hitherto unknown country, it arrived again at its point of departure from British territory. The trifling opposition which our overwhelming force had met with was disappointing from the soldier's point of view, and it was the feeling in camp that we had missed a grand opportunity of reading a lesson to our truculent neighbours, and, above all, of "smashing" the Hindoostanees, who had so long defied us. To me, however, any disappointment I might have felt on this account was compensated for by the pleasure of commanding a mixed brigade of British and Native troops on service, and by the delights of camp life in a region so strange and interesting as the pine-covered Black Mountain. As a matter of course the force was not broken up without a few well turned phrases expressive of the satisfaction of the Government at the way in which the duties exacted of the troops had been

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performed, and the cheerfulness with which they had borne the necessary discomforts of a service which had to be performed in the lightest marching order possible.

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I was now free to rejoin my own regiment, which had felt aggrieved in not being permitted to share in a campaign in which their commandant held a high command. My station was at Dera Ismail Khan, where I had not been quartered since the early sixties. But I was not destined to be there for long. Sir William Mansfield, who had favoured me in giving me a brigade command in the late campaign, did not forget me when that service was ended. In January 1869 he recommended me to Government for employment as brigadier-general on the Staff of the Army, and appointed me to command the Gwalior district in Central India. Thus my service of twenty years on the frontier was brought to an end, and with it my long and happy connexion with the 5th Punjab Infantry. That our parting was a very sad one need hardly be said. If, as I have narrated, I was deeply affected at parting with my old comrades of the 21st Native Infantry twenty years before, it would have been strange if I could have said goodbye without a feeling of grief to a regiment which, if I had not actually raised, I had trained and commanded for the last seventeen years in all the vicissitudes of frontier service.

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The late Major-General Sir Alfred Wilde, K.C.B., then commanding, as I have said, the Frontier Force, was pleased to issue the following general order on my leaving the Force. I cannot resist the pleasure of transcribing it in full:—

"Punjab Frontier Force Order No. 3 of 3rd February, 1869.

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"The departure from the frontier of Colonel J. L. Vaughan, Commandant of the 5th Punjab Infantry, where he has served for twenty years, affords the Brigadier-General commanding a fitting opportunity of placing upon record in the annals of the Punjab Frontier Force the long, meritorious, and highly distinguished services of this officer. Brigadier-General J. L. Vaughan, C.B., was one of the first officers who, after the annexation of the Punjab in 1848, assisted in the organization of the Punjab Frontier Force.

"His great professional attainments, untiring zeal and devotion to duty, soon attracted the notice of the late Sir Henry Lawrence, who conferred on him, soon after he joined, the command of the 5th Punjab Infantry, which corps has become, under his guidance, one of the best and most reliable regiments of the Frontier Force.

"The influence he exercised over the men he commanded, arising as it did from his intimate knowledge of their language and their country, was singularly tested in 1857–8, when the 5th Punjab Infantry, under Brigadier-General Vaughan's leadership, confronted, fought with, and defeated the rebel Native soldiers of the 55th Native Infantry at Attock and in Eusufzye. To Brigadier-General Vaughan and his men is due the credit of having so successfully initiated that encounter; and by displaying this example of fidelity he contributed in a great degree towards the memorable services of the regiments of the Force during that most eventful war.

"Brigadier-General Vaughan has served in most of our frontier expeditions, and his past distinguished career, and present responsible command, must be a gratifying proof, to the junior officers of the Punjab Frontier Force, of the readiness of the Government to recognize and acknowledge duty

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honestly and faithfully performed in the Force to which we belong."

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Though out of place in point of time, it will be perhaps appropriate if I here note that thirty-three years after thus saying good-bye to my old regiment as just related, and twenty-two years after I had met it again on service in the Afghan campaign 1879–81, I received, in September, 1903, to my great surprise and pleasure, the following, letter from Lieutenant-Colonel F. P. L. White, who at present commands the Fifth :—

" From Lieut.-Colonel F. P. L. White, Commanding
5th Punjab Infantry,
" To General Sir J. Luther Vaughan, K.C.B.

" RAWAL PINDEE, *August* 19, 1903.

" SIR,—On June 8, 1903, I was advised by the Adjutant-General in India that His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief had obtained the sanction of the Secretary of State for India to the renumbering of the Indian Army.

" I enclose copies of correspondence which ensued, and which closed with a letter from General Duff, Adjutant-General in India, advising me that the 5th Punjab Infantry was in future to be known as the 58th Vaughan's Rifles Frontier Force.

" I have not as yet received official intimation that the request for your appointment as its first Honorary Colonel has been accorded, but I venture in anticipation of such advices to address you on this subject, trusting that you will do the 58th Vaughan's Rifles Frontier Force the honour of accepting this appointment, and so continuing to the regiment under its new number and designation the dearly cherished traditions acquired as the 5th Punjab Infantry Punjab Frontier Force.

" From the history of the regiment I am aware

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that the regiment was raised and commanded for some eighteen months by Major-General Henry Gastrell; but it was under your command, sir, that the 5th Punjab Infantry was first afforded the opportunity of proving its loyalty to Government under the most trying conditions a great State ever experienced. With that bright record in its past, it will ever be the earnest endeavour of all ranks of the regiment to live up to, and prove itself worthy of, so glorious a tradition.

"May I, on behalf of the British officers of the regiment, express the hope that you will do us the honour of presenting the Officers' mess with a picture of yourself? I can assure you it will be valued as our dearest possession.

"Before closing this letter, I venture to bring to your notice what is to us a very interesting fact. We have still serving in the regiment a Native officer —Subadar Major Pasand Khan—who at the time you relinquished the appointment of Commandant, was a Sepoy in the regiment. He thus forms for us a link with a much treasured past which will finally be cemented by your return to the regiment as its Colonel.

"I have the honour to be, sir,
"Your obedient servant,
(Signed) "F. P. L. WHITE, Lieut.-Colonel,
"Commanding 5th Punjab Infantry."

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My reply to Colonel White's very agreeable letter may be conceived without my giving it *in extenso*.

The re-numbering of the Indian Army will doubtless afford other instances of regiments being given designations recalling the names of former commandants; but the fact remains that thirty-three years after I had left the 5th Punjab Infantry, and when it was commanded by an officer to whom I was a

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perfect stranger, the memory of my command was still green enough for him to plead with the commander-in-chief for a designation to be given to the regiment which would connect my name inseparably with it. To Colonel White and his officers I feel that I owe a debt of gratitude which I can only acknowledge without hoping to pay further than by saying that, opportunity given, I am sure they will not fail to augment any credit which the "58th Vaughan's Rifles Frontier Force" may have gained whilst I commanded it.

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CHAPTER XI

Brigade and Divisional Commands

THE somewhat painful leave-taking with my regiment over, I lost no time in entering upon my new duties. My small belongings at Dera Ismail Khan were soon disposed of, including, to my great subsequent regret, my horses. I had always been efficiently, if not handsomely mounted, and when I joined my new command, I bitterly repented of having hurriedly sold a handsome Waler charger, an Arab equally good on parade and in the hunting field, a country-bred which had never failed me in my long frontier rides, and a Deccanee pony which I had bought at the sale of a friend killed at Umbeyla, and which, though of an evil temper, had done me excellent service on road and field. The nearest point at which I should touch the railway in my journey to Morar was 250 miles from my starting-point; and in those days, when railroads were comparatively new, rates high, and the risk of injury in entraining and detraining considerable, I thought it more prudent to trust to the chance of mounting myself satisfactorily on arrival at my destination. In this, as it turned out, I was quite wrong.

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My route to Gwalior, the district to which I was appointed, lay through Mooltan, Lahore, Umballa and Agra. I was never, I scarcely know why, in much favour with the high officials of the Punjab, though they had been my immediate masters for so many years. I therefore passed through Lahore without any formal leave-taking with the Government

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officials; but broke my long journey at Umballa, in order to say good-bye to my constant friend of old frontier days—Reynell Taylor, whom I had not met since the Umbeyla campaign. The railway continued to help me as far as Agra, and I then fell back upon the more primitive mode of travelling, called in India in those days, "carriage dawk." In a few hours I crossed the river Chumbal, and then found myself in the feudatory State of Gwalior, and going over the ground in which my first battle was fought, Maharajpore, 1843. The fact was remarkable that I, who had first smelt powder in the humble rank of lieutenant and galloper to General Littler at the commencement of my service, should now be traversing the same ground, to take the command as Brigadier-General of all the troops in the district.

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The headquarter station of the Gwalior command was known as Morar, probably from some village of that name in existence, when, after the campaign of 1843, a military station was first established in the Gwalior country. I was received on arrival at Morar by the Staff officers of the command, amongst whom I was pleased to find Lieutenant Lockhart, who had been on the Staff of my brigade in the Black Mountain campaign. I have previously mentioned the distinction to which this then promising officer afterwards attained, namely, the rank of Commander-in-Chief in India. Though separated by the distance of England from India, Lockhart and I always kept up a cordial friendship, and the last time I saw him was on his return to England after the Tirah campaign, which he had so ably conducted in the late nineties. He then told me what pleasant interviews he had had with Queen Victoria, and how she had surprised him by the interest she had evidently taken in the progress of the campaign, and how well she was acquainted with all its incidents. He

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afterwards kindly allowed me to dedicate to him the reprint of my Pushtoo Grammar; but, alas! he died before the book appeared.

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The troops at Morar were of all arms, a battery of Horse Artillery, a light Field Battery, a regiment of Native Cavalry, a regiment of British Infantry and three or four of Native Infantry. The Gwalior command included the subordinate military station of Jhansi, the strong fort of which name fell, after a formal siege, to Sir Hugh Rose and the Central India Field Force in the Mutiny of 1857. At Jhansi was quartered that grand regiment known in those days as the 93rd Highlanders—a regiment which, in splendid rivalry with a Native regiment, the 4th Punjab Infantry, stormed and took the Sikandar-bagh in Lord Clyde's relief of Lucknow, 1857, slaying, as was computed at the time, two thousand of the Sepoy mutineers.

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Coming, as I did, straight from the frontier, where the English Army was only represented by a couple of companies at Dera Ismail Khan, I had, of course, much to learn in respect of British troops and their internal economy. In all that related to Infantry drill and the exercises of the parade-ground I may claim to have been a past master; nor was the manœuvring of the three arms in brigade at all strange to me, thanks to my frontier experience. Indeed, I think I a little astonished both my own Staff, and the commanding officers of batteries and regiments, when I gave them a taste of the practical field-days we were accustomed to on the frontier, and exercised them for the first time in the open country. But, of course, brigade parades were but a small part of my duties as a Brigadier-General; and I had much to learn before I could hope that my reports, rendered to headquarters at the periodical

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inspections, were of any value to the Commander-in-Chief. I shall have something to say on this subject in a subsequent note.

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On my arrival at Morar, the house was pointed out to me which my predecessor in command had occupied. It was large and commodious to an extent quite out of proportion to my own private wants; but I knew that my position would require me to exercise hospitality, and to promote the general harmony and contentment of those under my command by a judicious hospitality. I therefore arranged to rent this house, and thought myself fortunate that Major Cookes, who commanded the Horse Artillery battery at Morar, and his wife, were content to occupy a portion of it, and to assist me in my social duties, which were novel and somewhat formidable to me.

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At first, I must confess, my new position disappointed me. I missed the friends I had left on the frontier; and the duties of society, and the artificialities of life in a large Indian military station, were distasteful to me after the free and hearty life of the frontier. But my feelings changed as I warmed to my new work, and as I got accustomed to new faces and habits. My time, too, was very fully employed, for besides the ordinary duties of such a command, which were by no means light, I had, as already said, much to learn of the internal economy of British troops, and was only moderately acquainted with Artillery and Cavalry drill. I have often thought since that it would be well if every officer were required, at some period of his service, to do duty for a certain fixed time with each of the Arms other than his own. Without some such requirement, an officer appointed to a command composed of the three Arms can hardly at first make his reports to army headquarters of

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any value. I remedied my own inexperience of the other Arms as far as was possible by theoretical and book study; but for a time I felt at a loss when inspecting Cavalry or Artillery, and as if the whole performance was rather an imposture.

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My predecessor in the Gwalior command had been a very distinguished Artillery officer, the late Major-General Sir Henry Tombs. I was greatly assisted in my own duties by reading General Tombs' brigade orders, and his correspondence with Army Headquarters, etc. Of course I made much use of my own Staff officers, who had served long enough on the Staff to be able to inform me on many matters in which I was inexperienced. Major Cookes, too, of the Horse Artillery, who, as I have said, shared my quarters, was a mine of information to me on Artillery matters.

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Gwalior is the name of the important independent Mahratta State of which the Maharajah Scindiah was the Chief. In view of his political importance, Scindiah was accorded the honour of having an English officer of rank as Resident at his Court. I was pleased to find that the Resident was no other than Major-General Crawford Chamberlain, the younger brother of my respected and esteemed general, Sir Neville Chamberlain. Etiquette required that I should be introduced to Scindiah by the Resident at a formal interview. A visit was accordingly arranged, and one afternoon, attended by my Staff officers, and in full uniform, I rode to the palace, and, after formal introduction, had a quarter of an hour's talk with the Maharajah. His conversation was chiefly on military subjects, for the Maharajah of my time aspired to be a great soldier, and was very proud of his army, which was organized on the lines of our own Native army,

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though with a difference! Any one could see that Scindiah was a discontented man, labouring under a grievance. And little wonder; for since 1857, the ruler of this great independent State, who had been our loyal feudatory for years, had been subjected to the indignity of having his ancestral fortress garrisoned by British soldiers; and at the time of my visit, more than one 18 pr. gun was actually levelled at his palace! Soon after I gave up the command of the district I have understood that this indignity ceased, and that the British garrison was withdrawn from the fort.

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As the summer advanced, that dreadful scourge of India, cholera, appeared amongst the British troops at Morar. Those who have not gone through the anxieties of a visitation of this kind can have no idea of the uneasiness which the first appearance of cholera begets, even in minds not disposed to be fanciful or nervous. In this instance the disease first appeared in the two centre barracks of the eight occupied by the British regiment. It was as though an angel of destruction had passed through the central street of the barracks, dealing death on both sides. The first cases were confined to these two barracks, but before many days the disease became what the doctors call sporadic, and appeared in other barracks besides those first attacked. It is the first duty of officers of all ranks in visitations of this kind to pay frequent visits to the hospitals and barracks, and to hearten up the men by every means in their power. It is rare to find officers fail in their duty on these occasions, and the conduct of the medical officers is always beyond praise. I believe I did not fail to set a good example to those under my command, and was able to show an indifference to the danger of infection which perhaps I did not altogether feel. Happily the virulence of the disease did not last very long. Before

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many days the cases became fewer, and after a few anxious weeks ceased altogether.

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Naturally, one of the first things I did after settling down to my command at Gwalior was to revisit the scene of my first battle, Maharajpore, 1843. It could not but be interesting to me, who was now in a position of high command, to revisit a field of battle in which, twenty-eight years before, I had played the humble part of an acting aide de camp. I had no difficulty in identifying the spot where Wright's Brigade halted to breakfast, and found itself under fire of the Mahratta guns from Maharajpore village. Next I found the very tree to which I had ridden when told by General Littler I might reconnoitre to the front, and find out the number and position of the enemy's guns. Then I followed the line of advance of the brigade from Maharajpore village towards the enemy's camp at Chowndah, in the course of which advance I was near being carried into the enemy's lines by a runaway horse! The whole scene came vividly to my recollection, even to the point where, the enemy's camp having been taken, I heard a sergeant of the 39th say to a comrade, "I see them Mahrattas coming over that 'ere hill *in column of sections*"—a drill-book formation, which it was very unlikely the beaten and half-disciplined Mahratta Infantry would adopt at the moment!

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I spent the usual two months' leave that autumn at Simla: and well I remember how delightful I thought that abode of pleasure, after the heat and the recent depressing influences of cholera-stricken Morar. I was well received by Sir William Mansfield (afterwards Lord Sandhurst), a Commander-in-Chief, rare in those days, who had had considerable experience of Indian service before he attained his high position. As commanding officer of an infantry regiment

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of the line, he had been known as the author of some remarkably able letters, published from time to time in the local press. He was, however, best known as Chief of the Staff to Lord Clyde in the Mutiny days. He was considered to have greatly contributed to the success of Lord Clyde's operations up to the final capture of Lucknow in 1858, but fell in Indian public estimation for the subsequent leisurely way in which Lord Clyde conducted the concluding operations of the period. The "hackerry campaign," as it was often called, which followed, was laid a good deal to the charge of the Chief of the Staff: but he never lost the character of a scientific and highly accomplished officer.

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At Simla I met many of my old frontier friends, who had perhaps come to Simla on the same errand which had brought me there in previous years. When I returned to Morar, it was time for me to visit Jhansi in order to take the inspection of the 93rd Highlanders. This was to me a most agreeable duty, for it roused all my military enthusiasm to inspect a British regiment with such a history as the 93rd. When the inspection was concluded I made the regiment a little complimentary speech, in which I praised their appearance and their performance before me, and recalled some of their achievements;—in particular how, jointly with the 4th Punjab Infantry, they had stormed the Sikandarbagh in Lord Clyde's relief of Lucknow, 1857, when, as noted before, the slain rebel Sepoys were put at two thousand! The 93rd regiment, it will be remembered, was the "thin red line" which barred the approach of the Russians to Balaclava on the day of the fatal charge of the Light Brigade.

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Following my inspection of the 93rd, I had to inspect the British Infantry regiment, as well as the batteries and Native regiments at Morar. None of

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these inspections gave the same pleasure as that of the 93rd. In inspecting Artillery I had, as I have explained, the consciousness of a very superficial acquaintance with the drill and particularities of that Arm, and, therefore, a natural fear of making some ludicrous mistake. I suppose all Infantry officers, when they first take command of mixed troops, feel much the same diffidence that I did. My diffidence was perhaps aggravated by having read some of the reports on Artillery inspections made by my predecessor in command, Major-General Sir Henry Tombs. General Tombs was, as I have said, a distinguished Artillery officer. I noted how his eagle eye had detected little blots which I should never have noticed. I was not going to pretend to a minute knowledge of Artillery matters which I did not possess, and so practised a prudent reserve in going through a battery inspection, and confined myself to generalities in the reports I sent to Headquarters. I believe that in this way I avoided irritating Artillery officers, and perhaps making myself ridiculous in their eyes; and yet made a true and reliable report.

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The same when I had to inspect Cavalry, though here I was more at home, because in my long frontier experience, and thanks to the *camaraderie* which prevailed among us, I had seen and learned a great deal of Cavalry matters. In short, I had reason to hope for a useful and agreeable term of command, and that I should, year by year, become more proficient in my duties as Brigadier-General in the case of the other Arms than my own. These hopes were, however, doomed to disappointment, for my command was, by my ill luck, to be terminated when it was still almost in its infancy, as I shall go on to explain.

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A great readjustment of the dates of commission of the senior officers of the Indian Army took place

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about this time, which affected me most unfavourably. Why this readjustment should have been necessary I am unable to say. I merely know that the effect of it was to place my name almost at the head of the list of Colonels of the Indian Army, and so to bring me within a few months, perhaps weeks, of certain promotion to Major-General. As a Colonel in the Army I had been eligible for the command of a brigade, with the rank of Brigadier-General. On promotion to Major-General I should no longer be eligible to hold a brigade command, and could only command a division. Divisional commands are few, and it might be, and indeed was, years before a division fell vacant, whilst there were officers senior to me eligible to fill such vacancies as they might occur. At last then it seemed that my military employment was on the point of coming to an end, whilst I was still on the right side of fifty; and indeed, my promotion to Major-General was almost immediately gazetted.

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I appealed to Lord Napier of Magdala, then Commander-in-Chief, against the hardship which this readjustment of the dates of our commissions inflicted upon me and other officers in the same position. The sweets and pecuniary advantages of an officer's life begin when he attains to brigade command. But for this readjustment of the dates of commissions (necessitated, it may be presumed, by some official carelessness) I should have enjoyed those advantages for four or five years. This would have enabled me to retire eventually in comparative affluence, as soldiers count affluence. My grievance was fully admitted by Lord Napier, and he wrote me a most kind and sympathetic letter; but he explained that he had no power to alter the fixed rules of the Service. All that he could do for me was to offer me the temporary command of the Allahabad Division, which was vacant pending the arrival from England of the Major-General who stood appointed permanently to it.

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I may without vanity believe that this sudden and unexpected termination of my command of the Gwalior district was viewed with regret by those under my command. My social duties had been well and liberally performed, and my military sway, I think, had been so exercised as to gain me respect and confidence. It was useless, however, to repine, and on the arrival of the Brigadier-General appointed to succeed me, the late well known General Sir William Olpherts, K.C.B., I took my departure from Morar with a heavy heart for my new and temporary command.

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Of course it was impossible to feel much enthusiasm on entering upon a command which would only last for a few weeks. Still, the kind words of Lord Napier, and his expressed regret that the regulations of the Army made it impossible that I should retain my command of the Gwalior district, gave me hopes that I should be restored to active service in my increased rank before very long. It was also some consolation to think that I should, if only for a few weeks, have filled the highest appointment which military service ordinarily offers—the command of a division. So I took fresh heart, and entered upon my new duties with cheerfulness.

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The Allahabad Division is not a favourite one with general officers holding divisional commands. Allahabad, the headquarters, is an important strategical point, being at the confluence of the Ganges and Jumna rivers, and on the high road from Calcutta to Delhi, Peshawar, etc. The fort of Allahabad, though contemptible in view of modern Artillery, affords adequate protection to a most important arsenal, which supplies the munitions of war to a great part of the army of Upper India. The climate of Allahabad partakes of the disadvantages of

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both Bengal and the North-west Provinces. It is under the full influence of the summer hot winds of North-west India, whilst it lacks the pleasant coolness of the winter months at Delhi, Umballa, and Lahore. More to the point than climate, the station of Allahabad in 1870 was extremely backward in the way of barrack accommodation for British troops. It was straggling, and had a forlorn look as if it had not quite recovered from the disorders of 1857. One barrack, in which a battery of Artillery was quartered, was of such antiquated and unhealthy construction, that it was a disgrace to the Government that it had not long ago been swept into the dust-heap.

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I was fortunate in finding a temporary home without the necessity of renting an expensive house. An officer and his wife, friends of mine at Morar, and who had migrated in course of relief to Allahabad, offered me the accommodation which was sufficient for my probably short tenure of the command.

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It was the hot season of the year, when there is an almost total cessation of the outdoor work of British, and, in a less degree, of Native troops, so that my favourite cross-country parades were not possible. Indeed, the country about Allahabad does not lend itself to cross-country parades at any time, being enclosed and highly cultivated; I had, therefore, few opportunities of making myself personally acquainted with the troops in the division, and was thrown back upon the routine and indoor duties of the command, which were but moderately to my taste. The only matter which disturbed the even tenour of hot-weather military life whilst I commanded the Allahabad division was the persistent report—repeated from so many different quarters that it was impossible to altogether ignore it—that a movement was

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on foot which would take the form of an outbreak like the Mutiny of 1857. Nana Sahib, of Cawnpore infamy, was resuscitated by the newspapers of this period for the third or fourth time since I had reported his death in the Nepaul jungles from my camp on the Raptee in 1859. Much seditious talk was no doubt indulged in in the bazaars of Allahabad, Benares, Juanpore, etc. I don't think I thought these bazaar rumours worthy of serious report to Army Headquarters, but I quietly ordered officers commanding batteries of Artillery to march their batteries occasionally through the public streets and roads, so as to remind the ill-disposed that things were not as they had been in 1857.

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My term of office in command of the Allahabad Division was not long in coming to an end, and I duly made over the command to a well known and distinguished officer, Major-General Beatson, who was many years my senior in the service. My active employment was for the time absolutely at an end, and I had the choice of what I would decide to do. I might live on at Simla, for instance, in inglorious idleness, for the chance of falling into one of the half-dozen appointments reserved in India for Major-Generals, or I might depart to England, with the chance of my very existence being forgotten by the military authorities in India. It was a sorry choice, but the Franco-Prussian war was at its height, and the lessons it was affording in all matters pertaining to the military profession could be better studied from a nearer point of view than India. Private considerations too all pointed the same way: so I took my passage to England.

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I was a bitterly disappointed man. When appointed to the Gwalior command, I was justified in looking forward to retaining it for the usual period of five years,

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and at the end of that time to obtaining, when my turn came, still higher and more lucrative employment. By the accident of some unexpected change being made in the rules for Army promotion, or perhaps by a blunder on the part of those whose duty it is to keep accurate record of promotion in the different ranks, my anticipated five years' service as Brigadier-General had come to an end at the expiration of a single year. Whatever the cause, the result to me was, that I was condemned to what might be professional extinction, whilst in the enjoyment of perfect health, at an age when all my faculties were at their best, and whilst my ambition and enthusiasm for my profession were unabated.

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But my mind was not so perverted by a sense of harsh treatment on this occasion as not on the whole to look back with satisfaction on my thirty years of military duty. As a young subaltern I had had the luck to see some exciting field service, and in a Native Infantry regiment of the period had subsequently, as Adjutant, won the good opinion of successive commanding officers. I had seen my regiment, whilst I was Adjutant, come to be accounted one of the smartest in the Army. In the grades successively of Captain, Major, and Lieutenant-Colonel, I had commanded and brought to a high state of discipline and efficiency a regiment of the Punjab Frontier Force, and repeatedly led it on service in the field. Without interest, and solely on my character as an officer, I had been chosen by Sir William Mansfield for the command of a brigade proceeding on service. The same Commander-in-Chief had subsequently appointed me to the command of a first-class district as Brigadier-General; and, when a too rapid promotion brought that service to an end, his successor, Lord Napier of Magdala, had nominated me temporarily to the highest command a Commander-in-Chief can be-

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stow, the command of a division. The record was not a bad one, though it might easily have been better. At any rate, it was a record of good honourable work, zealously performed. So I determined not to lose heart, and to hope yet for a speedy return to active employment.

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CHAPTER XII

A New Departure

I KNOW few things more pitiable than the condition of an officer of, say, the Indian Army who, after twenty-five or thirty years spent in active professional life, finds himself suddenly relegated to the insipidity of English domestic life. When this misfortune befell me, I was in perfect health, young for my age, full of professional enthusiasm, and conscious that I was placed on the shelf just at the moment when my faculties were at their best, and when the sweets of military service had just opened to me. For many years I had been a big man in my own small sphere, and an object of respect to those by whom I was surrounded. My life had been busy, and full of interest and excitement. In England I was nobody. I had had no opportunity of saving money till the last year of my service in India, and on my modest military pay I was unable to hunt, yacht, or rent shooting. I was perforce reduced to the idle and *dilettanti* life of the London club, or of the domestic circle. Neither of these lives is, I know, without its enjoyments, but what I wanted was work and regular employment. I had always in India, from my subaltern days, had the reputation—not I dare say deserved—of being a good hand with my pen, and the pen seemed the only employment open to me. So I tried to fill up my time by contributing, not very successfully I must admit, to the

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periodical press of the day. Also on two or three occasions I read papers at the Royal United Service Institution, which I believe were well liked.

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In the meantime I did what I could to keep myself in the recollection of the Indian military authorities, and lived in the hope of being recalled to active military service. I also tried hard, and at one time with a prospect of success, to get a seat upon the India Council. With this idea I kept myself in touch with such ex-magnates of the Punjab as the late Sir Robert Montgomery, who was always kindly disposed to me. I renewed my acquaintance too with my commander of Crimea days, the late General Sir Robert Vivian, and he always gave his former deputy Quarter-Master-General a hearty reception, and liked to talk over our Crimean recollections. My hopes, however, in the direction of the India Council were never realized.

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When I had waited three or four years, and had become nearly hopeless of a recall to military duty, or of obtaining other congenial employment, an offer was made to me by the chairman of the London and North-western Railway which—weary of an idle life in London—I accepted after some hesitation. I must premise that, with a view to the easier working of that huge concern, the London and North-western Railway, the line has been broken up into a number of different sections, to each of which a superintendent is appointed, who is the executive authority in his own section. All these superintendents are controlled in their turn by the General Manager at Euston. Thus "the southern division," as it is called, comprises the main line from Euston to Stafford, and all the branch lines diverging from it. The rest of the main line is portioned out in the same way, whilst other sections are formed of the remote extensions of the

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system in the west of England, Wales, etc. The duties of the superintending officers of the sections are, it will be understood, very important, and multifarious. To enumerate a few of them. The superintending officer is responsible for the regular working of the passenger and goods traffic emanating in or passing through his section. He acts as commanding officer of a perfect army of subordinates in the shape of station-masters, guards, signalmen, porters, and others; keeps them to the proper performance of their duties, and holds the same position towards them as a commanding officer of a regiment to his officers and men. The returns which a superintendent receives and furnishes are very numerous, and give employment to many clerks. In fact, a superintendent's duties are endless, and no harder-worked man exists in any profession. The offer made to me by the chairman was that I should take the post of superintendent of the southern division.

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The southern division had, for many years, been superintended by Captain Brueys, a retired officer of the Royal Engineers. Captain Brueys was about to be superannuated, and Mr. (afterwards Sir Richard) Moon, then chairman, wished that his successor should also be a military man. My name was suggested by one of the directors,[1] a relative of mine, and the offer of the appointment followed. At first I modestly demurred, for I had no more knowledge of railway work than is possessed by the ordinary railway traveller. It was, however, explained to me that I should have an assistant under me, who would conduct the clerical duties of the superintendent's office at Euston, and that my duties would be principally what are called "out-door" duties, which, with my military experience, I should soon learn. "Outdoor duties," I was given to understand,

[1] J. P. Bickersteth, Esq., vice-chairman of the Line.

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meant all such duties as are not performed within the four walls of the office at Euston, and necessitated constant travelling over "the line," with the charge of the enormous *personnel* of the section. I was further told that if I accepted, and before I actually took office, I could be attached for a time to the experienced superintendent of one of the other divisions, who would put me in the way of seeing and learning what the duties of a superintending officer were.

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I recalled the saying of my old chief in the Turkish Contingent, Colonel Wetherall, that "no wall is so hard but that if you only ram your head hard enough against it, it will go through," and accepted the proffered appointment, to which a liberal salary was attached. I went to Liverpool, and put myself straightway under the tutelage of the able superintendent of that division. In the course of three or four months I had acquired sufficient confidence to enter on my duties at Euston. It was an unusual position for a Major-General in Her Majesty's service, but one which had its points of resemblance to that of a military officer in high command. If I was to reckon up the number of railway guards, signalmen, porters, etc., who looked up to me as their commanding officer, it would perhaps not fall far short of that of the brigade I had lately commanded at Gwalior. At Euston alone I had nearly the strength of a regiment; and the regiment would soon be swelled to a brigade if I reckoned up the *employés* through the whole extent of my charge. So I felt that, after all, I had not fallen on a bad billet.

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It was impossible at first not to feel somewhat strange and out of place in a position so foreign to what I had been accustomed to. But I took my courage in both hands, and as I warmed to my work, I found it not only interesting, but within my capacity

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to perform. Every one seemed disposed and anxious to help me, from the General Manager to the humblest signalman. The higher officials may have felt their dignity somewhat enhanced that a real live general had come among them to share their duties. The minor officials and railway servants, on the other hand, liked to be under a military officer of my rank, and vied with one another in trying to make my duties easy to me. Humble and faithful friends, never can I forget our pleasant association! Though many years have passed since we parted company, I never travel on the London and North-Western line to this day (1904) without receiving from such few servants of my time of office as still remain hearty tokens of recognition, and perhaps a pleased reference to some personal incident of the far-off time when I was hailed as your superintendent!

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As it had been settled that the duties I had to perform would be principally "out-door" duties, it followed that much of my time was spent in travelling about the main line and its numerous branches. This was a kind of duty which I enjoyed, and the "master's eye" is even more essential to the good working of a railway than of an ordinary business. In the course of my first year at Euston there were few stations on the main line or branches of my division which I had not visited; and few signal-boxes to which I had not mounted. I found visiting a railway station for inspection purposes very like the analogous duty in the army. I had learned what matters it was most important to look into during my tutelage at Liverpool: the general appearance of the station, the cleanliness of the rooms and offices, the way in which the passenger trains were handled, whether with alertness or lazily, etc., etc. As a rule I rarely had fault to find. The station-masters at the busier stations are always selected men, and

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perform their multifarious duties with great care and intelligence. The class of railway servants which perhaps interested me most was the signalmen. They are largely recruited from reservists and old soldiers, and as an army officer, I was naturally acceptable to them.

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The principal and most important station in my section of the line was, of course, Euston. Being the point of departure and arrival for all main line trains, my duties in connexion with it were very onerous, and caused me at first much perplexity and anxiety. My anxieties were not the less that Euston lived under the vigilant eye of the chairman, who rarely missed a day in coming to London, and added to his vast duties as Chairman by taking note of the most trifling irregularities which came under his notice in his journeys to town.

I was, however, fortunate in having a most excellent station-master at Euston in the late Mr. Rich. Rich had been specially selected for the post he filled. He had a thorough knowledge of the peculiar difficulties of the Euston traffic, and of the complications liable to arise from the departure and arrival of an endless series of trains. To this he added great tact and charm of manner, which made him acceptable to all classes of railway travellers. He could deal gracefully with the highest as with the lowest class of passengers. Of course he had an excellent staff of subordinates under him, as well he might have, to conduct successfully duties so complicated. I can never over-estimate the help he was to me at Euston, or the assistance he gave me, as well when my duties were novel to me as afterwards.

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Willesden was another station which was always an anxiety to me. Every train out of and into London stopped at Willesden. It is the station which

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receives all the coal traffic from the north, and from which that traffic is distributed to London and the south. It is also the centre from which the London and North-Western passenger trains running over the various metropolitan lines take their departure. I confess that when I visited Willesden, on first taking office, I was utterly appalled by the unceasing arrival and departure of trains, the extent of the station and sidings, and the puzzling arrangement of the platforms. But here again I was fortunate in my station-master, Mr. Beer. Beer explained everything with such quiet confidence that the despair I at first felt of ever understanding the working of the station was replaced by the conviction that I might trust him to save me from being discredited by any misadventure to the working of the traffic which care and forethought could prevent. My future visits to Willesden were rarely for other purpose than to praise and encourage Beer in his overwhelming duties. Beer was greatly respected at Willesden beyond the limits of the station. He died after my connexion with the railway had ceased—I have no doubt from overwork and anxiety.

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A third station which was the occasion of many anxious visits was Rugby. Rugby—the scene of a well-remembered incident of my schooldays—besides its great passenger traffic, is the depot into which the coal traffic of the line is shot until it can be forwarded to Willesden and the south. Here also my responsibility was much lightened by the presence of a capital station-master, Mr. Allen. Allen was not in office when I first took charge, but was appointed later, after a very serious block in the coal traffic in the time of his predecessor. He had been attached to the staff of the General Manager as a man of unfailing resource in the case of any hitch in the working of the goods or coal traffic. When he had cured the block in the coal

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traffic referred to above, it was arranged, to my great joy, that he should remain at Rugby as permanent station-master. He had a remarkable talent for the details of railway work, which was most useful to the railway. From the time of his appointment to Rugby the coal traffic was worked with perfect smoothness, and I was never again discredited by a block.

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The routine of my daily life at Euston was something as follows. I entered my office soon after nine, and found my assistant with a pile of papers before him—the correspondence of the day. Out of this pile, he would hand me such papers as he could not deal with on his own responsibility. These would often be many and voluminous, and the next two hours would be occupied in considering them. Then, if called by duty in no other direction, which was often the case, I was free to give my attention to "outdoor" matters, of which there were always plenty, which called me in one direction or another. The working of the metropolitan traffic often took me to some remote point in London; or perhaps a main-line matter called me to a more or less distant station between Euston and Stafford; or the business of some branch line took me to Oxford or Cambridge, Northampton or Leicester. Often I could not get back to London the same night, and had to sleep wherever I might happen to be. These journeys by train were not, be it understood, pleasure journeys, the tedium of which could be lightened, as an ordinary traveller lightens it, by reading newspapers or novels. I was sure to have a heap of urgent papers to wade through; and often I took with me a shorthand clerk to whom I could dictate replies and orders as the train went on. We worked at exceedingly high pressure on the London and North-Western Railway, from the Chairman himself to the humblest *employé!*

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In later years it has often surprised me how, with the limited experience of railway work that I at first possessed, I was able to get through my duties creditably, and without incurring the displeasure of a very exacting Chairman, or of the General Manager. I can only account for it by calling to mind the kind assistance and encouragement which I received from all the railway people whether above or below me. Mr. Moon, the Chairman, was always gracious and friendly, at the same time that he let me see that he expected me to devote myself heart and soul to the performance of my duties. The General Manager, Mr. G. Findlay, I only saw on rare occasions, but Mr. Neile, the traffic superintendent for the whole line, was very much my friend, always accessible, and ready to help me with his advice. My own assistant was only moderately helpful, and never quite forgave me for being put over his head. I am sure, however, if I had not been relieved by him from the burden of much of the indoor and office duties, I could not have succeeded as well as I did. There is much of the indoor work of a superintendent's office which I never mastered, and which I was happily allowed to leave to a very capable if unfriendly assistant.

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The Chairman, the well-known Mr. Richard Moon, created a baronet at Queen Victoria's first jubilee —greatly, I believe, to his own dissatisfaction—was, I suppose, one of the most able and successful railway chairmen of the last century: witness that wonderful organization, the railway over which he presided. In one phase of his character he used to remind me of what one has heard and read of the great Duke of Wellington. He had no sympathy or sentiment, and set duty above everything—his duty to the railway and the shareholders. Every man of the railway worked at the highest pressure, knowing that the chairman was utterly intolerant

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of the least laxity or forgetfulness in duty matters. Nothing escaped his notice. He has walked into my office at Euston to tell me of some trivial matter which he had noticed on his almost daily journey to London, a jet of gas burning to waste at some wayside station, or a truck standing where it ought not to be in a railway siding. He was the terror of station-masters and of the minor officials, and even the higher railway officials were not summoned to his room at Euston without a tremor. Still he was not disliked. We were proud of his pre-eminence among railway chairmen and of the position to which he had raised our railway. Military talent, and the talent required for the successful management of a great railway, have much in common; and if Sir Richard Moon had been a soldier instead of a railway chairman, he would surely have made his mark. He liked to talk on military matters with me, and even in those days was critical of the War Office shortcomings. Had he lived to these days, he would have been an admirable member of the Commission for re-organization of the War Office.

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Mr. Findlay, afterwards knighted by Queen Victoria, was the general, or, as he was officially styled, the traffic manager. It did not fall to me to see much of him, and I was under the impression that the Chairman's whim, as he probably thought it, of choosing me to be Captain Brueys' successor was not altogether approved of by him. Mr. Findlay was, I think, brought up in the school of one of the great railway contractors—Brassey, perhaps—and had won his important position at Euston by sheer ability and force of character. He was not a highly educated man, but it was impossible not to be struck by the terse Anglo-Saxon in which, in committee of directors, he could state a case, and give his reasons for recommending a particular course of action. All I saw or heard of him at Euston showed

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him to be a strong and just man, worthy to be the executive head of such a railway as the London and North-Western.

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One of the duties which occasionally fell to me whilst at Euston was to make the arrangements for the shorter journeys of Royalty, and to travel in the train to see that all went right. I call to mind several short journeys in the neighbourhood of London made by his present Majesty when Prince of Wales, the Princess of Wales, Princess Louise, etc., etc. When the late Empress of Austria was hunting one year from the neighbourhood of Market Harboro', I had often to arrange local trains for her convenience, and she was always gracious, and did not stint her thanks for the small services I rendered her, any more than our own Royalties did.

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But far more agreeable to me than these occasional glimpses of Royalty were the days which I spent in travelling over portions of the main line and branches for purposes of inspection. On these occasions I was authorized to call upon the locomotive department to furnish an engine, which with a carriage and guard's van made a handy little train. I could stop my train wherever I pleased, and could thus visit every signal-box if I liked. In this way I became personally acquainted with those serving under me, and I saw and heard much which I could afterwards turn to account. I was also entitled, in my character of divisional superintendent, to travel upon the engine of any train instead of in a carriage. In the exercise of this privilege I have ridden on the engine of an express train through the Kilsby tunnel, upwards of a mile long, between Rugby and Weedon. The sensation of travelling through such a long tunnel at express speed, and unprotected by the carriage walls and ceiling, was novel, and at first somewhat alarming.

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The exit at the other end is shown by just a speck of light towards which the train gradually travels. Never till I travelled on the engine did I fully realize the strain under which the driver works.

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Whilst I was at Euston, Lord Napier of Magdala, whom I had left four or five years before as Commander-in-Chief in India, returned to England, and I went to see him. He highly approved of my having taken railway employment, and asked many questions about my duties. He was greatly interested in what I told him about the signalmen, and how many of them were reservists or had completed their army service. As he was no longer in office, I did not trouble him with my disappointments, nor with my hopes of being recalled some day to military service. I was satisfied that he approved the choice of work and employment in preference to the somewhat purposeless and torpid life of a London Club.

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In the course of my duties, which included the superintendence of the Oxford branch of the line, I became acquainted with the late Sir Harry Verney, of Clayton, who was as much respected in public as he was charming in private life. As my associates in railway life were not generally of refined education, and were too much occupied in their every-day duties to cultivate polite literature, it was a great pleasure to me to have occasional opportunities of enjoying the society of Sir Harry Verney and his wife, a sister of Miss Florence Nightingale. Sir Harry, seeing how contented I was with my railway duties, asked me to propose his son, the late Captain George Verney, who had left the army prematurely, for employment on the railway. The

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chairman, who at the time liked the idea of enlisting military men in the railway service, gave Captain Verney the opportunity of learning railway work. Captain Verney was very earnest and enthusiastic at first; but his zeal soon cooled, and he never became a "railway man."

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I had been nearly four years at Euston, and was getting tired of the eternal racket of railway life when, unexpectedly, I found myself free to seek a return to military employment. As the Chairman had shown such confidence in my character and ability as to place me in a post the duties of which were utterly strange to me, I had felt that it would ill become me not to throw myself heart and soul into my work, and so had, for four years, refrained from seeking actively to return to the profession I loved. I knew the risk I was running of being forgotten in India, and the thought often made me uneasy. This was the state of things when I was requested one morning to see Mr. Findlay, who had a communication to make to me. Mr. Findlay, in his usual straightforward way, told me that important changes were about to be made in the staff at Euston, and that, amongst others, it was intended to replace me by a much younger man from whom great things were expected. I may say here that the expectation was realized, and that my young successor in a few years rose to be head of the railway department in one of the Australian Governments. Mr. Findlay's announcement did not surprise me, for I knew that I was considered by some of the directors and high officials an interloper at Euston, who, by a whim of the Chairman, had succeeded Captain Brueys, to the detriment of men who had helped to make the railway what it was. I was mortified, but for the reason given above not altogether displeased to be free.

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During the remaining three months of my stay at Euston I had several interviews with the Chairman, and if he alluded, half-apologetically, to my being about to leave, I took care to show him that I was quite pleased to resume my liberty.

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Though I was not altogether displeased that my connexion with the railway was to end, it was different with those over whom I ruled. I may say without vanity that the general feeling of all the railway men, whose superior I had been for nearly four years, was one of regret that they were losing for their chief a general and a gentleman. At every station on the line where I announced my approaching departure the regret expressed was unmistakably sincere. It is now twenty-six years (1904) since we parted company, yet my name is still affectionately remembered on the line. Of course few of my old friends still remain, but I never visit Euston or travel on the line but that I am recognized by some one of the older servants, who love to shake hands with me, and recall some incident of our former connexion. The feeling of regret with which my railway men heard that I was leaving was, I need hardly say, warmly reciprocated by me.

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I had a friendly parting with the Chairman and higher officials at Euston. The same feeling which I attributed to the latter on my first taking charge, perhaps made them regret that I was no longer to be numbered in their ranks. I only met Sir Richard Moon once afterwards. I found that he was staying at the same hotel as I was at Malvern twenty years later (1898), and sadly broken in health. Our meeting was a most cordial one on both sides, and I heard of his death a few months later with sincere

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regret. Nor have I read with indifference of the death subsequently of Mr. Findlay, and of my two most helpful subordinates, Rich and Beer, and of many others.

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CHAPTER XIII

A Second New Departure

NOW that I was free from my engagement at Euston, I could take stock of the situation. I found that the debtor and creditor sides stood something like this. On the credit side I had obviously to place the practical experience I had gained of railway business, which can never be superfluous to a military officer now that railways play so important a part in modern warfare. Next—a most valuable asset—I had to place to the credit side a greatly enlarged acquaintance, and therefore aptitude for dealing with all classes of men, from the highest to the lowest, from the eager and practical man of business, or the man of idleness and pleasure, to the humblest artizan. This was an asset which could never be superfluous, and is one which military officers, who live in what may be called a special groove, have rarely the opportunity of acquiring. I may add that railway life at high pressure, such as I had lived for nearly four years, cannot fail to impart a certain briskness of habit and alertness in business valuable to soldier and civilian alike.

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On the other side of the account I had to place the fact that I had now been long enough away from India to have lost touch with the Indian military hierarchy. The class of appointment to which my rank confined me was a very limited one, and for

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every vacancy there were sure to be many candidates with claims quite as great as my own.

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However I lost no time in making known to the Adjutant-General in India that I earnestly desired re-employment, and in due course received the usual stereotyped answer which officers know so well. My application had been noted, and would be considered when opportunity offered. The answer was what I had expected, and there was nothing for it but patience. The Afghan war of 1879 was looming in the distance, and I was buoyed up by the hope that in some way or another, if the war came, I, an old frontier officer, proficient in the Afghan language, might find employment.

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Within a few months of this time the crisis in Afghan politics came to a head, and military action was decided to be necessary. Afghanistan was to be invaded from three different points. My old comrade of the Punjab Frontier Force, General Sir Samuel Browne, was to command one column. My fellow Adjutant of very early days, General Sir Donald Stewart, was to command another; the late Commander-in-Chief, Lord Roberts, whose peculiar fitness for high command had been detected by the often abused Lord Lytton, was to command the third. My own claims to command were not equal to those of Browne or Stewart, so their good fortune caused me no disappointment; and even if I might have aspired to the command of the third column, who can regret, in view of his distinguished services in the late war and in the Afghan war of 1879–80, that the road to the highest place was opened to Roberts by his selection to command a column in 1878?

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I had during all my service been a devoted

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student and observer of Afghan history and politics. The first Afghan war, 1839–42, was in progress when I landed in India (1841), and the hope of taking part in it was the immediate reason of my accepting so readily a commission in the Indian Army. I knew every detail of the first British occupation of Afghanistan. I had followed every step of Elphinstone's fatal retreat from Kabul in 1841–2, and had gloried in the heroic final stand made by a few British officers and the remnant of the 44th Foot at the Jugdulluck Pass. I had studied with intense interest Sale's glorious defence of Jellalabad; Pollock's forcing of the Khyber Pass; and Nott's and Pollock's triumphant re-occupation of Kabul. For twenty years on the frontier I had gazed at the rugged hills which separate India from Afghanistan, and longed for the day, always in sight, but never reached, when at the head of British troops I should visit the different scenes of our disasters and triumphs. The moment had come when it was possible, though not exactly in the way I had hoped, to realize the long-formed wish; and in despair of a military command in the invading armies, I incontinently wrote to the *Times* offering myself as its special military correspondent for the war. The offer was accepted; and thus commenced a connexion which lasted for the greater part of the three following years, and was to me a source of much pleasure and contentment, and which I have every reason to believe was quite satisfactory to the *Times*.

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Of course my first duty on being accepted was to see Mr. Macdonald, the manager of the *Times*. Most Londoners know the *Times* Office—that imposing *palazzo* at the west end of Queen Victoria Street. I had many times looked at it with a respectful curiosity, and I felt my personal dignity increased by having henceforward a right to enter it. Mr.

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Macdonald received me cordially, almost flatteringly. I told him of my long service on the frontier, and of my familiarity with everything connected with the Afghan question. I allowed that the duties of a war correspondent were new to me. He told me that I should find them perfectly simple, and that before I started for India he would put down on paper a few necessary hints for my guidance. Then, with that wonderful power of lucid explanation which he possessed, and which reminded me just a little of Mr. Findlay at Euston, he made me *au fait* of the exact situation of things military and political connected with the war, as far as was known in the best informed quarters in England. He gave me to understand that after the first successes of General Roberts at the Paiwar Kotul, and of Sir Samuel Browne at the Khyber, there was likely to be a suspension for a time of active military operations, in the hope that the Ameer Sher Ali would be disposed to become reasonable; that further military operations might therefore not be necessary, but that at any rate I should be in time for them. I left Mr. Macdonald with a strong feeling of admiration and liking for him; I rejoiced in the step I had taken, and the interesting prospect which was opening to me.

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During the last few weeks before I offered myself to the *Times* I had been writing a paper, to be read at a meeting of the Royal United Service Institution, under the title of "The Military Operations in Afghanistan." As it was necessary that I should leave for India before the date fixed for the meeting, I arranged with General Sir Henry Rawlinson, who was to be in the chair, that the paper should be read for me. It was accordingly read by the well-known military historian, Colonel G. B. Malleson. I am proud to say that I can still read this paper without

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shame, and that the information it professed to give both of the country and of the Afghan Forces opposed to us, as well as the conclusions to which it came on the subject of the war, proved very fairly accurate.

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The promised "hints" for my guidance were duly sent to me by Mr. Macdonald, and very useful I found them: I think the following more general ones are worth transcribing:—

1. In preparing telegraphic messages, go over them when finished, striking out all words obviously suggested by the context; but be careful not to carry this process of economizing so far as to leave the meaning doubtful.

2. As a rule opinions and comments should be made by post, news being reserved for the wire.

3. Whether writing by post or telegraphing, bear in mind that the policy of the paper rests in the hands of the Editor, and that correspondents rather travel out of their true province when they leave the record of events for the assertion of their own convictions. What we mainly want from them is information, including in that term the opinions of other people worth knowing, rather than their own.

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With the "hints" I received from Mr. Macdonald, sundry blue books and maps, and my simple preparations completed, I started early in December 1878 for Bombay, by the well-remembered Brindisi route. On arrival at Bombay I took train to Allahabad, my immediate destination being Lahore. The *Times* had been dependent for its information during the first stage of the war upon such chance correspondents as it could enlist amongst the officers of the various columns. One of these, who had contributed, by the way, an excellent letter descriptive of Browne's operations in the Khyber Pass,

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was Major George White, then an officer of the 92nd Highlanders, and not many years later Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army. He has since achieved a more extended reputation as the gallant defender of Ladysmith. Charles Austin,[1] an old and talented correspondent of the *Times*, was, by this time, on his way to the front, and my instructions were to see and confer with him before I attached myself to any of the columns. Austin had got as far as Lahore when I reached India; and as military operations were for a time suspended, he there awaited my arrival. It was speedily decided between us that we should serve the *Times* best if I went to Calcutta and endeavoured to get into touch with Lord Lytton, in order to acquaint myself, if possible, with the probable course of events; and that Austin should remain at Lahore near the Punjab Government, where he would be well placed for receiving news from the Khyber and Kuram columns.

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My first interview, when I got to Calcutta, was with Colonel Colley, then private secretary to the Viceroy, who twelve months later was to lose his life so miserably at Majuba Hill as Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Natal. My credentials from the *Times* were, of course, in order, whilst my rank as a general officer was a voucher to Colley for my discretion in anything he might confide to me. Colley had mentioned my appointment with him to the Viceroy, and Lord Lytton had told him he wished to see me. Lord Lytton received me with great cordiality as the brother of his old headmaster at Harrow, and as a military officer who was in the confidence of the *Times*. In an hour's interview, walking up and down one of the long corridors of Government

[1] The late Dr. Charles Sumner Austin, Fellow of St. John's College, Oxford.

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House, he told me as much of the probable course of events as he was willing the public should know, and conversed freely on the situation generally. He advised me to remain at present at the seat of government, Calcutta, instead of going at once to the front; for I should thus, he said, be in the best position for obtaining early news for the *Times*, as well as for my own guidance. Lord Lytton also told me that Colley should assist me with information as far as it was fair to other newspaper correspondents, and not detrimental to the public service. I left Government House with a confident feeling that my mission had begun well, and that I should be able to discharge the duties I had undertaken to the satisfaction of the *Times*.

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When a Viceroy condescends to give a *Times* correspondent advice under such circumstances, the *Times* correspondent can hardly be wrong if he acts upon it. So at least it appeared to me, though I felt some scruples in sitting down in luxury at Calcutta, when my engagement implied a life of comparative hardship on the wind-swept plateau of Afghanistan. So it was not without something like shame that I installed myself in the comfortable Military Club in Chowringhee.

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During the next few weeks I saw Colonel Colley almost daily, and was greatly indebted to him for the assistance he gave me in my work for the *Times*. He was, I should think, one of the first English theoretical soldiers of the day, inferior perhaps only to Sir Edward Hamley. He claimed to be the one military adviser of Lord Lytton who recognized the value of the Kuram route for an advance on Kabul. In a letter which I received from him at this time, he wrote :—

"Personally my hobby is the Kuram. When

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the Forces were originally detailed the almost universal criticism out here was that Roberts' Force was too large, and we were seriously appealed to by the best press writers, and in other directions also, to acknowledge our mistake and recall Roberts from an expedition that was mere waste of power, and send him to join Sam Browne on the Khyber line. Indeed, Roberts himself, and a large number of officers, grumbled at being sent on what they believed to be a fool's errand! I had given a good deal of attention to the Kuram question, and had studied it carefully both militarily and geographically, and had long ago come to the conclusion that the possession of the Peiwar held the most commanding military position, short of Kabul, in Afghanistan. I was led to this conclusion partly by observing its position on the map, equi-distant from Kabul, Ghuznee and Jellalabad, and flanking the road connecting Ghuznee with the other two; partly by the accounts of the Shutargardan and Peiwar Passes, which, taken together, do not constitute as great difficulties as the numerous passes on the Khyber line present; partly by the importance attached to it by the Ameer himself, as shown by the large cantonment always maintained at Ali Kheyl. The Ameer has, I think, justified my view of its importance by the strenuous efforts he made to secure it, more strenuous than he made for the Khyber; and by the fact that it was the Peiwar defeat, not that at Ali Musjed, that made him leave Kabul. The Kuram Valley is mainly fairly open, and inhabited by a peaceable agricultural population, so that our communications there will never be troublesome or uncertain."

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As was to be expected after so pronounced an opinion as Colley's in favour of the Kuram route, it was by this route that the advance upon Kabul

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was made a few weeks later by Roberts; and certainly the result justified Colley's preference for it. But if Colley was an admirable theorist in the art of war, he did not give me the impression that he would be equally good in practice. He tried to convince me quite seriously that a British regiment 1,000 strong, and armed with Martini-Henry rifles, ought to be able to march at will through the length and breadth of Afghanistan, when once clear of the Khyber and Kuram Passes! With ideas so wild, does not the misfortune of Majuba Hill become explicable? I have always mistrusted long service on the Staff as a training for field service, and Staff-college honours and distinction as proof of practical military ability; and I believe that the experience of our three years' war in South Africa would be found to justify my mistrust.

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I must confess that, notwithstanding my scruples, the next few weeks passed very pleasantly. All who have tried it will admit that Calcutta is a delightful place in the winter months. As an officer of rank, and perhaps more as correspondent of the *Times*, I had the *entrée* of some of the best houses in Calcutta. My duties for the *Times* were light. Field operations being suspended, there was little military news to send to the paper, and my weekly Sunday telegrams were as much political as military. They consisted mainly of what I had learnt or inferred from my frequent conversations with Colley, and such scraps of camp news from Browne's and Roberts' columns as Austin might have forwarded to me from Lahore. Lord Lytton, soon after his first reception of me, issued invitations for his annual Harrow dinner, and out of regard for his former headmaster, and perhaps more for my connexion with the *Times*, invited me, although I was a Rugby boy, to make one of the party. He

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was a delightful after-dinner speaker, and charmed every one by the speech he made on this occasion, and by the genial way in which he threw off the Viceroy, and dropped all formality for the evening. On a later occasion he presented me with a volume of his speeches—after-dinner, and others—which read, at all events, very charmingly.

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After some weeks thus pleasantly passed at Calcutta, I was warned by Colley that Lord Lytton was about to proceed to Lahore, and that a forward move of the columns, which had marked time for so long, was not improbable. Of course I started at once for Lahore, and there found that Austin had now received definite instructions for us from the *Times*. It was wished that I should attach myself to the Khyber column under Browne, and that Austin should return home, but only after visiting Simla, and writing from there, in his own light and happy style, half a dozen letters descriptive of society at that gay place. So I continued my journey with all speed to Peshawar, and there hurriedly provided myself with what was necessary for camp life. It was pleasant to see Peshawar again, for it still contained many friends of former days. I was surprised, however, to find that there was a strong feeling at Peshawar against Lord Lytton's supposed policy, and that he, personally, was in great disfavour. Gloomy forebodings were uttered in my presence. The Afreedees of the pass were discontented, and could not be depended upon to keep the pass open to us much longer. Easy terms ought to be offered to Yakub Khan in order to bring the war to a close. It was most unadvisable that our armies should go to Kabul, etc., etc. The situation at the moment certainly gave ground for some uneasiness. It will be remembered that after the defeat of his troops by Roberts at the Peiwar

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Kotal, and Browne's occupation of Jellalabad, the Ameer, Sher Ali, had fled to Turkestan, taking with him the Russian Mission, the cordial reception of which at Kabul, whilst our Mission was insultingly turned back, had been the immediate cause of the war. Sher Ali had died on February 21 in Turkestan. His son, Yakub Khan, had claimed the succession, and had shown a desire to make himself acceptable to the British Government. He was believed, however, to be a man of no great ability; and though apparently accepted by the country for the moment, in the face of three invading armies, yet his title to rule was likely to be disputed later. Yakub might possibly be insincere in making overtures for our friendship. All former experience had shown that an invasion of Afghanistan, and interference in its internal politics, was difficult and dangerous. Lord Lytton's counsels were known to be greatly influenced by Cavagnari, who was high in his favour. Cavagnari was believed to be a strong advocate for a forward policy, and in particular for the establishment of a permanent British Envoy at Kabul. In his capacity of political officer with the Khyber column he was trusted by Lord Lytton with the negotiations going on with Yakub, to the exclusion of the usual mouthpiece of the Government in dealing with the Ameers of Afghanistan, the Commissioner and Viceroy's Agent at Peshawar, who was thus set aside. There were therefore personal as well as public reasons why the situation was viewed unfavourably by the officials at Peshawar.

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My duty to the *Times* required that I should not conceal this dissatisfaction at Peshawar, but I was too fresh from the cheery influences of Colley and Lord Lytton to care much for it. It had the effect however, of making me more anxious to get to the

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front, and I quickly completed my preparations for a spell of camp life. Besides, I longed to see the Khyber Pass, so famous in frontier story, and to traverse the tangled maze of mountains which shut off Afghanistan from India, and of which I had heard and read so much during twenty years of frontier service. So it was with a light heart that I rode out to Jamrud, and spent my first night for eight years under the shelter of a tent.

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CHAPTER XIV

Afghanistan—Cavagnari and Yakub Khan

THE Khyber Pass, as the famous defile is called which has given passage to armies from Central Asia to India from the time of Alexander, has three times been made use of by the British Government, within my recollection, as a road to Afghanistan. It was first used in 1839, when a British officer, Colonel Wade, at the head of a motley body of troops, consisting chiefly of Sikhs of Runjeet Sing's old Khalsa army, with some hurriedly-collected levies, and a sprinkling of British Sepoys (of which my old regiment, the 21st, furnished one company), opened the road from Peshawar to Jellalabad as a help to Lord Keene's army advancing by way of the Bolan. The Khyber was used by us a second time in 1842, when Pollock forced it, at the head of his avenging army, in order to relieve Sale besieged in Jellalabad, and to restore our prestige lost in Elphinstone's unhappy and disastrous retreat from Kabul. The last occasion was when the pass was forced in the present campaign by Sir Sam. Browne. The Khyber has now (1904) become almost one of the show sights of India! An English lady, lately travelling in India for pleasure, has told me how, by permission of a late Commander-in-Chief, she was allowed to go as far as Ali Masjid, eight or ten miles within the pass, escorted only by one ragged Afreedee, who however was worth, she was assured, for her purpose, a

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company of British soldiers! Things were not quite so far advanced when I first saw the Khyber in April, 1879, though so perfect even then were Cavagnari's arrangements with the Afreedees of the pass, that I found it in full use for the requirements of Browne's two divisions. The roadway had been levelled and all obstacles cleared away, until it was passable even by the clumsy wheeled carts of the Punjab and India. It was crowded with these carts, camels and mules, all of them under what looked very slender escort. I stayed a short time at Ali Masjid, to explore the old Afghan fort, and to make some notes as to the best way of attacking or defending it as the case might be; and then rode on to Lundi-Kotal, which it was safe to do, because besides my own small personal escort of two or three Sowars, there was a constant succession of small parties of our soldiers marching through the Pass in charge of stores; and at points of peculiar danger towers had been erected, each garrisoned by three or four friendly Afreedees, to give security to the road.

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Lundi-Kotal—the *col* of Lundi—some Afreedee hero of whom the memory is lost, is 3,600 feet above sea level, and marks the watershed between the Peshawar and Jellalabad ends of the pass. From the Kotal an easy drop of about 3,000 feet conducts into a valley, from which point the difficulties of the road cease. Nature clearly intended Lundi-Kotal for the scientific frontier we were in search of between India and Afghanistan, because its possession will always give us the power to pour troops at will into Afghanistan. This is surely all we want. We do not want Lundi-Kotal as a barrier to keep an enemy from India, but to give us the means of attacking him beyond our border. The advantages of the position were so self-evident, that ever since

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the war it has been adopted as our most advanced post between Peshawar and Afghanistan.

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From Lundi-Kotal I pushed on to Jellalabad, and halted there for a day to make myself acquainted with the scene of Sale's historic defence of Jellalabad 1841–2, and of his victory over the besieging army of Akbar Khan on the 7th April of the latter year. Standing upon the walls of the fort, now occupied by our own troops, and looking across the plain in the direction of Gandamak it was easy to picture how the "illustrious garrison," as Lord Ellenborough styled it, had, on the bleak January afternoon forty years before, become conscious of the figure of a solitary horseman approaching from the direction of Gandamak, and evidently in the last stage of weariness and exhaustion: how this figure was presently recognized to be Surgeon Brydon, and how he explained to the horrified garrison that he was the only man, of the thousands that Elphinstone had led from Kabul a week before, who had escaped death or capture in the passes between Kabul and Jellalabad. The whole story was familiar to me from the time I first became a soldier, and it was intensely interesting to be standing on the very scene. It was pleasant, too, to think how much historic ground lay in front of me, and that if fortune took me, as seemed likely, to Kabul, I should be able to visit every scene of the ghastly retreat. So, happy in my spell of camp life in a country full of interest to me, I resumed my journey, and soon reached the camp of the first division of the Khyber column at Gandamak.

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My first duty on arrival in camp was, of course, to call on my old comrade of the frontier, General Sir Sam. Browne. There is something in the empty sleeve of an officer which disposes every one at first

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sight in his favour; and first impressions would not be dispelled on further acquaintance with Browne. On the frontier he was always looked upon by us as the very best of comrades; a most efficient Cavalry officer, sure to do the right thing at the right time; brave, simple, and modest; a first-rate shot, and a successful pursuer of the big game of the frontier and of Kashmir. The Victoria Cross, which he gained when he lost an arm in the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, proved him a valiant Cavalry officer, and we all rejoiced at his good fortune then, as we did afterwards, when he became a favourite of our present King. I had lost sight of Browne for some years, during which he had filled one of the highest posts under Government, that of Military Member of the Viceroy's Council. From that high position he had passed to the command of the Khyber column, and had conducted it safely through the difficulties of the Khyber Pass into Afganistan. He gave me a cordial welcome in a *rôle* so different to that in which he had formerly known me, and promised me every assistance he could properly give. I was disappointed, but not much surprised, to find that Browne was a little despondent about the future of the campaign in which he held so enviable a command, and was not enthusiastic about the onward march to Kabul. Perhaps this was not wonderful. The troops had been in camp for about five months, the greater part of that time in standing camps, without the excitement of fighting. The initiative had passed from the military to the political chief, and all were now waiting for the issue of the negotiations which Cavagnari was carrying on with Yakub Khan, the *de facto* Ameer of Afghanistan. I did not however find that Browne's weariness of the campaign was shared in by the camp generally. On the contrary, the hope was freely expressed that —as Lord Lytton described it—they might yet

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stable their horses in the Bala Hissar at Kabul.

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Having done what was proper to my old comrade Browne, my next call was on Cavagnari. Before leaving Calcutta I had written to tell him that I had enrolled myself in the honourable body of special correspondents, and to bespeak his assistance when I should join the Khyber column. He had replied very pleasantly that "the *Times* is to be congratulated on having an officer of your experience to act as its correspondent, and it will be easier for me to explain matters to you than to some of the correspondents I have met with, who are absolutely ignorant of the most elementary portion of the subject"; and he concluded by saying that "you may rest assured that I will offer no opposition to your accompanying me if I go forward to Kabul." The idea at that moment was that Cavagnari would go to Kabul to settle matters with Yakub Khan, whilst the troops remained in their several positions, ready to resume the campaign if terms were not arrived at peaceably. Cavagnari being thus friendly, I had reason to hope that my work for the *Times* would go on under favourable circumstances. At this time Cavagnari was by general consent the most rising of the young political officers of the day. He had the full confidence of Lord Lytton, and was entrusted with negotiations of great importance both to England and to India. In person he was small, slight, and almost delicately formed, with features to match; but there was an unmistakable combination of thoughtfulness and vigour in his face and manner. Until the last few months he had been best known as an active and daring frontier administrator, who could plan with skill, and execute with determination, those small expeditions for the seizure and chastisement of border offenders which are common in the Peshawar marches. Cavag-

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nari had long been dissatisfied with the anything-for-a-quiet-life policy which for many years had governed our relations with Afghanistan. As district officer at Peshawar and Kohat he had been well placed for acquiring a knowledge of Afghan politics: and Lord Lytton, who was as quick to discover political merit as he had been to discover an able soldier in Roberts, chose him for his agent in carrying out the new Afghan policy imposed on him from home. From my subsequent conversations with Cavagnari, I think his personal views for the settlement of Afghanistan were bolder and more comprehensive than those upon which he was instructed to work by Lord Lytton and the Home Government, and which ultimately produced the treaty of Gandamak. That treaty represented the best settlement possible at the time; and if Yakub had been strong, and perhaps loyal, it might have lasted; but not being the one, and perhaps not the other, the treaty proved abortive; and its failure was so far fortunate in that it made way for the only strong man in Afghanistan, Abdur Rahman Khan, who, and his successor, have given peace to Afghanistan for twenty-four years.

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From my arrival at Gandamak dated my life as a real military correspondent of the *Times*, although, for the moment, there was little of a military nature to communicate. The interest entirely centred in political matters, that is, in the progress of the negotiations which were being conducted by Cavagnari with Yakub Khan. As Cavagnari was always accessible to me, and was aware, like Lord Lytton and Colley, of the important influence which a well-instructed Press exerts, he was quite disposed to talk freely with me. On first reaching the camp, my position, I confess, was not altogether agreeable to me. I was unhappy to feel that I was with an

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army in the field without being of it: that I had no share in the military life about me, soldier though I was. I heard the military words of command on all sides, but they were not for me to give or to obey. I saw subalterns saluted by the soldiers, but I, in civilian garb, could claim, though a general officer, no corresponding acknowledgment. All this was mortifying to one who loved his profession, and was conscious of possessing some experience and ability in it. Sometimes I almost regretted the step I had taken in offering myself to the *Times* as correspondent, and thus exposing myself to needless mortification.

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But I was of too happy a disposition to be miserable long. True, I thought, I should indeed be happy to be in Browne's place, but, after all, he has a weight of responsibility upon him from which I am free; and is it not something that I am in the service and confidence of the mighty *Times*, and that I may have the opportunity of recording events, the story of which will be read in all the countries of Europe? I am not sure that I did not even take comfort from the fact that Xenophon accompanied the Greek contingent of Cyrus as a private friend only of one of the generals—a special correspondent, in fact—and that he ended by leading his 10,000 Greeks as Commander-in-chief from Babylon to the Bosphorus, and wrote a military narrative which has made his name famous for all time!

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What contributed to making me contented with the duty I had undertaken was that I received about this time letters from Mr. MacDonald which assured me that my work was appreciated. I therefore took fresh heart, and though the weeks passed in what the camp thought inglorious idleness, I was content. True, summer, hot even in Afghanistan, was approaching, and the probability was becoming greater that

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we should see Peshawar again before we saw Kabul. All this time Yakub Khan was demurring to the terms upon which Lord Lytton was willing to make peace and acknowledge him as Ameer: and it was not until he had been warned that we might have to look out among the numerous aspirants for another and more pliable successor to his father, that he consented to come to Gandamak and to treat upon our terms. Accordingly, early in May, he was reported to be within one march of Gandamak, on his way to our camp, and arrangements were made to give him a formal reception as Ameer. A guard of honour, composed of fifty men of the 10th Hussars, and fifty Cavalry of the Guides, started from camp at daylight on May 8, accompanied by Cavagnari, who had invited me to join him. We met Yakub's party about three miles within the Jugdulluck pass, having passed by that distance the fatal hill which was the scene of the final struggle between the unhappy remnant of Elphinstone's army and the relentless Afghan tribesmen. The Ameer was riding in front of his party, his principal officers of State being behind him. A halt was called, and after a few minutes devoted to compliments between him and Cavagnari, we turned back to camp, where the Ameer was received with all honour, and escorted to his tent through a long double line of all the troops of the 1st Division in review order. I suppose the Ameer presented a very different appearance on this occasion from what he did when he betook himself a few months later to General Roberts' camp at Kushi. I described him to the *Times* as being of decidedly aristocratic appearance, and as quite representative of the gallant soldier and skilful general which in his earlier years he had often shown himself to be. Roberts, on the contrary, describes him a few months later as " an insignificant-looking man with a receding forehead, a conical shaped head, and no chin to speak of," and as " giving him the

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idea of being entirely wanting in that force of character without which no one could hope to govern or hold in check the warlike and turbulent people of Afghanistan." Of course we saw him under totally different circumstances. When I saw him, he came as an honoured guest whom we were prepared to treat with on equal terms, as the *de facto* ruler of Afghanistan. When Roberts saw him, he represented himself as being a refugee from his own soldiery, and he was certainly conscious that he was suspected of having plotted the attack on Cavagnari's party, or at least, of not having done what he ought to protect it from the violence of his mutinous soldiers. As to the conical-shaped head, I must own that I can confirm that from my remembrance of a portrait of Yakub made in our camp by Mr. Simpson, the well-known correspondent of the *Illustrated London News*. Mr. Simpson drew the conical head, and humorously described the operation when Yakub took off his cap, as reminding him of nothing so much as drawing a weapon out of its sheath! The portrait was sent by the artist to Lord Lytton for his amusement, and, I believe, eventually found its way to Queen Victoria through the then Secretary for India, Lord Cranbrook!

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Cavagnari's work went on merrily after Yakub's reception in camp, and soon produced the treaty of Gandamak. The clause in this treaty which interested me most was the one providing for a British envoy to reside permanently at Kabul. Of course it was understood that Cavagnari would be the first envoy. The *Times* wished me, and I was personally most desirous, to accompany the Mission. Lord Lytton would have consented, but the Ameer in his conversations with Cavagnari had shown himself so afraid of being accused by the Afghans of having thrown open his country to the Kaffirs (unbelievers), that Lord Lytton felt himself obliged to refuse leave to accom-

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pany the Mission to every one not officially connected with it. The *Times*, I believe, used its great influence in London to get Lord Lytton's decision relaxed in my favour, but without success. When I saw Lord Lytton a few months later, he reminded me of his having been obliged to disappoint me on this occasion, "but," said he, "I suppose now you have forgiven me!"

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The signature of the treaty of Gandamak was of course the signal for the troops to be withdrawn from Afghanistan, but before the camp broke up, I paid a most interesting visit to what I have called the "fatal" hill—the hill on which the last remnant of Elphinstone's Kabul army, reduced to about seventy officers and men, took their final stand in January 1842, and perished almost to a man. The following is the description I wrote for the *Times* when all the circumstances were fresh in my memory :—

"The road to Kabul passes at four miles from the camp at Gandamak close under the memorable hill where the last stand of the retreating Kabul force was made in January 1842, and where the seventy brave men, who had fought their way under every privation and difficulty up to that point, were finally overpowered by their pitiless enemies. It is easy in viewing this sacred spot to conjure up the scene again, and to picture the diminished band, as, dauntless to the last, it resisted the attempt of the Afghans to possess themselves of its arms under the guise of friendly offers of bread and milk, which the exhausted soldiers were purchasing with their last rupees. The treacherous attempt was repelled with the same resolution which had carried our brave countrymen so far. The last remaining rounds of ammunition, however, were soon expended, and the stones with which the hill is covered were soon the only defence left. Then the assailants, whom

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the last volleys had driven to a safe distance, perceived that their time had come, and rushing in with their cruel knives put an end to the dreadful scene. The colours of the British regiment (the 44th) which Captain Souter, with a devotion perhaps hardly remembered, had wrapped round his body, were saved by him, as they, in turn, are said to have saved his life. The rude Ghilzais, struck by the strange envelopment, and fancying that the bearer of a covering so rich and unusual must be an officer of high rank, spared his life, and also the lives of three or four of his humbler comrades, and eventually sent them to join the other captives in the hands of Akbar Khan. It has recently been told how when this memorable hill was first visited by officers of Sir Sam. Browne's force, it was found still whitened in places by the bones of this gallant band. The hasty sepulture afforded to the sacred remains by Pollock's force had been unavailing, the stones piled upon them having become disturbed in the lapse of years. Once more they have had to receive, at the hands of sympathetic comrades, respectful care; and a solid cairn of stones now covers them, let it be hoped, until the grave gives up its dead."

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I may add that our camp at Gandamak was visited by Ghilzais who declared that they were present and took part in this last fatal struggle. Whether from real personal recollection, or from the cunning hope of benefiting by the tale, they praised the bravery with which our men fought and died, and spoke of them in terms of admiration and respect, not of triumphant boastfulness.

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My mention of Captain Souter in connexion with the "fatal" hill of the Jugdulluck Pass reminds me of an incident which occurred whilst I was with the Gandamak camp. A survey party from our camp

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was engaged in mapping the surrounding country, when they were approached by an Afghan villager with a paper in his hand, which he tendered to the survey officers. The paper contained some English writing which was deciphered in camp to be a letter from the same Captain Souter, of the 44th Foot, written after his capture as above related, and addressed to Major McGregor, the political officer with Sale at Jellalabad. The letter explained that he was a prisoner of certain Ghilzai villagers, and begged McGregor to obtain his release, or at least to get him sent to join the other English prisoners and hostages in the hands of Akbar Khan. A postscript to the letter was in these words: "Please send me some clothes: I have been here fourteen days—a long while to wear a bloody shirt." The probable explanation of this curious relic from the tragedy of 1842 is, that the villager to whom Souter entrusted his letter either played him false, or was unable or afraid to take it to Jellalabad. So with the superstitious reverence common amongst illiterate Asiatics for a piece of writing, or from a vague idea that some day it might be worth money, he laid it by, and it was preserved in the family until, thirty-eight years later, a British army encamped at Gandamak. So interesting a relic of the past was well worth a few rupees, and I have no doubt earned them. I tried to buy it for the *Times*, but was forestalled. Though his letter miscarried, Souter's capture by the villagers became known to Akbar Khan, and he was sent for to join the other prisoners. Souter's son was, in 1879, at the head of the Bombay police, and I wrote to tell him how curiously his father's letter had come into our hands. He was of course deeply interested, and sent me a grateful letter.

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By the kindness of Cavagnari I had an interview before he returned to Kabul with the Ameer Yakub

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Khan. I spent a pleasant hour with him, our conversation being carried on in Pushtoo, the domestic language of Afghanistan, as Persian is the official and polite one. He liked to air the slight knowledge he possessed of geography, and of European places and manners; but his knowledge, derived chiefly from the English pictorial press, was very limited. Political subjects were not discussed, but he was quite ready to talk of the harsh treatment he had received from his father Shere Ali, and of the cruel imprisonment he had undergone. I suppose our interview left a favourable impression on his mind: for when I saw him in a less happy situation some months later at Kabul, he welcomed me as one of the only three friends he had ever possessed, the two others being poor Cavagnari and Roberts!

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Soon after this the Gandamak camp was broken up, and the troops commenced their return march to Peshawar. Cholera was rife among them during the march, and it was in sorry plight that some of the British troops reached Peshawar. I got to that place on June 13, still in hopes that I should be allowed to accompany Cavagnari's Mission to Kabul. I spent the rest of the month in strenuous attempts to obtain a decision from Lord Lytton favourable to my wishes, but in vain. On July 2 a telegram reached me from Mr. MacDonald, "Return via Teheran." Thereupon I joined my colleague Austin at Simla.

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CHAPTER XV

The Persian Gulf and Bagdad

I WAS again a free man. True, the *Times* had telegraphed to me, "Return viâ Teheran," in the belief, as I afterwards understood, that interest was felt in England in the political relations between Russia and Persia, and in confidence of my ability to write them interesting letters from Teheran. But it was free to me, if I so pleased, to decline this further service for the *Times*, and to resume my place in the Army as an aspirant for military employment suitable to my rank. As once before, I had now again to marshal the factors in favour of, or against, each course. The principal factor in favour of my resuming my place in the Army was that I had gained the good opinion of Lord Lytton, and that I could reckon upon his assistance to get me active re-employment. But, as I have before noted, my rank made me ineligible for any but a very limited class of Army appointments, and vacancies in that class are of infrequent occurrence. I was as devoted as ever to my profession, but I dreaded a long spell of idle expectation; and besides, I had begun to like the position and work of a *Times* correspondent, and the *Times*' appreciation of that work was very flattering. The prospect, too, of an extended journey through new countries was tempting; and from Teheran I thought the *Times* might propose that I should visit Russian Turkestan, and compare the Russian system of dealing with its Asiatic subjects with our own. On the whole I decided not to sever my connexion

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with the *Times*, and forthwith set about my preparations for the journey to Teheran.

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Lord Lytton, to whom I made known the telegram I had received from Mr MacDonald, was most gracious. He sent me, under flying seal, the following letter of introduction to Mr Ronald Thomson, then British Minister to Persia :—

"SIMLA, *July* 26, 1879.

"MY DEAR MR. THOMSON,—Allow me to introduce to your acquaintance, and commend to your good offices, *en cas de besoin*, the bearer of this letter, Lieut.-General Vaughan, C.B. General Vaughan is about to visit Persia as correspondent for the *Times*, in which capacity throughout our recent Afghan War he combined the loyalty and devotion he inherits as a soldier, with an experienced judgment and powers of observation acquired in the course of long and distinguished military service on the frontiers of India : a service for which he has, on five different occasions, received the thanks of the Government. The General's object in visiting Persia is to study on the spot, for the enlightenment of public opinion at home, what may now be called the 'Persian question' in all its bearings, more especially, I believe, in relation to the destinies of Merv, and the proceedings of your Russian neighbours along the Atreck. Any general information on these subjects which are compatible with official discretion, you can help him to acquire, will, I doubt not, be gratefully and wisely used. May I also solicit on his behalf such protection and facilities for travel and inquiry as you may find it in your power to afford him.

"Pray believe me,

"Yours very sincerely,

"LYTTON."

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Not content with this handsome letter of introduction to our Minister at Teheran, Lord Lytton wrote about my intended journey to Sir Richard Temple, then Governor of Bombay, and who, he said, was more in touch than himself with affairs in the Persian Gulf and Persia. This brought me an invite from Sir Richard Temple to pay him a visit at Poonah before I left India, and a promise to help me by letters to the British Residents in the Gulf, at Muscat, and Bagdad.

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My next step was to find a companion for the journey to and through Persia, and this I was fortunate enough to do in the person of Major G. Stewart, of the Corps of Guides, who was going to England on leave, and was willing to exchange the ordinary journey for the more novel and adventurous one viâ Persia. So after a hearty leave-taking with Lord Lytton, Charles Austin, and other friends, I left Simla for Umballa on July 28, and from Umballa took train to Allahabad and Bombay. At Bombay I engaged a passage to Bussorah by an early steamer, and then spent a pleasant week with Sir Richard Temple at Poonah. During this week I learnt all I could from Sir Richard Temple on the subject of Persia, and went on board the *Patialla*, in Bombay harbour, on August 12. The horrors of the next three days may be passed over in silence. It was the height of the south-west monsoon, and what that means on the West Coast of India may be imagined!

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The *Patialla* steamed into Kurrachee harbour on August 15, when my future *compagnon de voyage* came on board, and we started the same night for the Persian Gulf. The *Patialla* was a screw steamer belonging to that enterprising company the British India Steam Navigation Co.,

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which has done much to develop the trade of India by opening up new ports, and extending commerce generally in the Indian Seas. The company's ships are specially constructed for the navigation of tropical seas. Their main decks are lofty and well-ventilated; the crews (Lascar) are smart, and the duties being quietly and unobtrusively carried on, they are very comfortable ships for the passengers.

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To the disappointment of Stewart and myself, we were not timed to stop at Muscat, the interesting little kingdom on the coast of Arabia which has lately been made familiar to the English public by the accounts of Lord Curzon's tour to the Gulf. The *Patialla* stopped nowhere till we got to that very uninteresting place Bunder Abbas, at the entrance of the Persian Gulf, where we landed cargo. From the deck we had a good sight of Ormuz, once a flourishing Portuguese settlement, now for two hundred years a deserted ruin. The roadstead between Bunder Abbas and the neighbouring island of Kishin was pointed out to us as having been the rendezvous of the fleet in the Persian Expedition of 1856. From Bunder Abbas we coasted along the Persian shore as far as the little port of Linga, and then struck across the Gulf to the island of Bahrein. As I was for the moment a mere traveller, I amused myself during our stay at Bahrein in learning something about the pearl fishery, the great industry of this part of the Gulf. Fishing, however, was, for the moment, in abeyance, on account of the fast of the Mohurrum, which is scrupulously observed by the Mohammedans of Bahrein and the Arabs of the coast. It was amusing to observe the excitement caused amongst the merchants and Arabs at Bahrein by the distribution of the letters brought by the

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Patialla, showing that that great civilizer, the post-office, is active even in this remote island.

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From Bahrein we again crossed the Gulf to Bushire, where Sir Richard Temple's letters brought Stewart and me a hospitable reception from the Resident, Colonel Ross. I spent the day in getting myself initiated by Colonel Ross in the politics of the Persian Gulf. He drew me a sad picture, true I am afraid to this day, of the misrule prevailing in Southern Persia : governorships leased to the highest bidder, with the result that the grossest extortion is practised on the working classes in order to recoup the price paid ; no return made to the peasant for the exorbitant taxes he pays, in the shape of roads, or courts of justice, or even of protection for life and property ; the consequent gradual depopulation of the country. Such was the picture Colonel Ross drew. The only satisfactory thing I could learn was that the policeing of the Gulf by the two or three British gunboats employed on the service, was admirable. After a day pleasantly and instructively passed we resumed our voyage and got to Kowait, the last of the places in the Gulf visited by Lord Curzon, and now of interest as the terminus which the German concessionaires desire for the Euphrates Valley Railway. I described Kowait in my notes of the day as "a large native (Arab) town, built on the south side of a very capacious bay." It took the *Patialla* nearly twenty-four hours to discharge her cargo at Kowait, and it was not until the following evening that we cast anchor at the mouth of the Shatt-el Arab, as the last fifty miles of the united Tigris and Euphrates is called. We steamed up the noble river the next day, and in the evening disembarked at Bussorah on the tenth day from Kurrachee, and the fourteenth from Bombay.

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We were hospitably entertained at Bussorah by the agent of the British India Steam Company, and found the place busy with the date harvest, just then gathered in. The wharves were loaded with boxes of the fruit for the English market, and we were told that most of them find their way into the Black Country of Staffordshire, where they are largely consumed by the miners. At Bussorah we transferred ourselves to a small river steamer, the *Blosse-Lynch*, in which we were to be conveyed up the Tigris to Bagdad. The *Blosse-Lynch* was a small cargo steamer of 100 horse-power, with great breadth of beam, and, even with a full cargo, drew very little water. I pass over the few incidents of the voyage, which was chiefly interesting from the novelty of steaming upon such historic rivers as the Euphrates and Tigris. The local Mohammedans, by the way, place the Garden of Eden at the junction of the two rivers. It is a mean unsightly piece of marshy ground, prolific only in a coarse grass and feathery reeds. The heat on the voyage was great, the thermometer in the small saloon cabin marking 101° the greater part of the long day. A hot wind blew from morning to evening, and was aggravated by the rate at which we were steaming against it. We were heartily glad to reach Bagdad on September 4, having been eight days and a half in doing the voyage from Bussorah. The Resident, Colonel Miles, whose friendly offices had again been bespoken for me by Sir Richard Temple, sent his steam launch for us, and gave us quarters and a hearty welcome at the Residency.

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The next four days were occupied by us in making preparations for the ride from Bagdad to Teheran by Hamadan and Kermanshah. I bought two excellent little Arab horses, at prices very different from those current in India for similar animals. I

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also found time to despatch a long post letter to the *Times*, partly descriptive, and partly dealing with political matters of Turkish Arabia. This, and another letter of the same import, Mr. MacDonald afterwards commended much. Since leaving Simla, I had become better satisfied with my position and prospects, and was looking forward with interest to a residence in the Persian capital, and acquainting myself with Persian politics. But it was not to be. We were sitting down to dinner at the Residency on September 8, when a telegram reached Colonel Miles telling him of the attack on the Kabul Residency on September 3, and the massacre of Cavagnari and all his party. Stewart, like the good soldier he was, made up his mind then and there to return to India by the English steamer which was fortunately starting for Bussorah next morning, sure that his regiment, the Corps of Guides, would be wanted for the now inevitable march on Kabul. I longed to follow his example, though sorry to have to forego the interesting journey to Teheran, but I thought it proper to wire to the *Times*, "Any orders?" The agent kindly consented to detain the boat until noon the next day, on my representation that I hoped for an answer to my wire by that time. No answer, however, reached me until 9 p.m. that day, when the steamer had left some hours. The answer when it came was what I hoped and expected, "Return to Afghan frontier at once."

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To return at once, however, was not easy. Communication between Baghdad and Bussorah in 1879 was limited to a bi-monthly service of steamers like the *Blosse-Lynch*, provided by an enterprising English firm, and I had just missed an opportunity which would not recur for a fortnight. For some hours I was in great perplexity, and chafed at the

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idea of being imprisoned in Turkish Arabia whilst fighting, which it was my office to describe, was probably going on in Afghanistan. I got to know, however, that the Turkish Government at Bagdad maintained for purposes of trade what they called a marine flotilla; and I called on the Superintendent, Fyzee Pasha, to inquire if he could help me to get quickly to Bussorah. He gave me hopes that the flotilla boat, *Risafir*, would start on the 16th of the month for Bussorah. The accommodation, I learnt, of the *Risafir* would be rough, and not like that of the English boats, but its rate of travelling should, barring accidents, get me to Bussorah in six days. If this speed was realized it was just possible that I might catch the Kurrachee steamer in which Stewart was to embark, before she left Bussorah.

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Of course I at once took a passage for myself and my two horses in the *Risafir*, and thought myself lucky in being, so far as horses were concerned, equipped for a campaign. This being happily settled, I was able to devote the few days intervening before the *Risafir* left to seeing something of Bagdad and its society under Colonel Miles' auspices.

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There is nothing very interesting in Bagdad as a city. It is, like most Eastern cities, mean and dilapidated, but full of life and activity. The bazaars, in which I always expected to meet Haroun-al-Rasched of Arabian Nights memory, were parcelled out among the different trades, and were full of commodities of use or luxury. I paid and received visits from the Turkish Governor-General of the Bagdad Pashalic, Abdool Rahman, as well as from Fouzee Pasha the Mushir (Lieut.-General) commanding the 6th Army Corps. The former was a good specimen of the high Turkish official, and pleased me by the feeling with which he spoke of the bad news from India, to which he said

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he would not have ventured to allude had I not led up to the subject. I tried to interest the Mushir Fouzee Pasha by telling him of my service in the Crimean War with Turkish troops, and that I was still proud of my commission as Kaim-makan (Lieut.-Colonel) in the Turkish army; but he was very unresponsive. I also made the acquaintance of, and had some interesting conversation with a Mr. Stanno, employed in the Finance Department at Bagdad, and I got from him much information which I utilized for my letters to the *Times*. Mr. Stanno was an *élève* and a warm admirer of Midhat Pasha, the well-known Turkish statesman and reformer of the seventies of the 19th century. As might be expected, Midhat did not long retain the favour of the Sultan, and was, I think, sent into a sort of honourable banishment as Governor of the Bagdad Pashalic. His rule, I was everywhere told, was most beneficent and enlightened, probably too much so for the times. This, at least, was a fair inference from the derelict dredging machine and traction engines which I saw at Bussorah and Bagdad, and which I was told Midhat had imported at great expense with a view to improve the approaches by sea to Bussorah and the roads and canals of Bussorah and Bagdad. Midhat Pasha was a rare example of a Turkish official who neglects to feather his own nest. I was told a touching story of him in illustration of this by another acquaintance I made at Bagdad.

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The acquaintance I refer to was the Nawab Ikbal-oo-Dowlut, an excellent specimen of a well-bred and educated Hindoostanee gentleman. He was of the Royal family of Oude, and so near the throne that I was assured that in the confusion of the time, when the direct government of Oude was being assumed by us, he actually reigned as king for some days. When the greatness of his family departed after the

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annexation, instead of assuming a malcontent attitude, like so many of his family, he betook himself to Bagdad, and, whether on a liberal pension from the British Government or from private means of his own, lived there in handsome style, respected by successive Residents and by Europeans and natives alike. He was a great friend of Midhat Pasha when he was Governor of Bagdad, and told me that when Midhat was recalled to Constantinople in disgrace, he was so poor that he had not even money enough to pay his journey. To obtain the necessary means he offered for sale amongst the residents of Bagdad, but without disclosing the ownership, a handsome watch and snuff-box. The Nawab bought them, and, suspecting the ownership, sent them back to Midhat along with, I believe, the hundred pounds, for which he had bought them. Midhat, however, absolutely refused to receive back the articles, and insisted on the Nawab retaining them. Other stories of Midhat to the same effect were current at Bagdad when I was there. Midhat, with others, was tried for his life in 1881 by the present Sultan for alleged complicity in the murder of the late Sultan Abdoolazeez, and was sentenced to death. When the sentence was subsequently commuted to banishment, he refused at first to quit Turkish soil, and was reported to have said, "I prefer to die here (Constantinople) in the sight of the world, as a specimen of the flagrant injustice of your judgments, rather than to perish in a remote corner where my death, like that of a barren tree, would cast no gloom and teach no lesson." He was, however, removed to Jeddah, and ultimately to Hedjaz, and died soon after, probably by violence.

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Whilst I was detained at Bagdad, the Nawab showed me many attentions, and one day entertained Colonel Miles and me at dinner, and for a night, at his country house some miles from the city. We

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found him a most perfect host. He had quite reconciled himself to the absorption of his country by our Government, and, whatever his actual feelings, never expressed the smallest rancour or ill-will. What with my liking for the Nawab and the courtesy I experienced from the English and Turkish officials, I was quite sorry when the time came for me to leave Bagdad.

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One more reminiscence of Bagdad. I was introduced to two Jewish families, and visited under their guidance a school for Jewish children supported by the "Alliance Israelite universelle," a Jewish Society of Paris. I found two hundred Jewish children under education in English, French, Arabic, Turkish and Hebrew.[1] The first class were examined in my presence in Molière's *L'Avare*, and one boy read a scene or two remarkably well. Another read a page from an English class-book of Universal History, and a third wrote down from dictation a few French sentences without hesitation or mistake. The Turkish Government give the school a small pecuniary allowance, and show an interest in its progress. A Turkish soldier sits at the door to prevent unwelcome Mohammedan intrusion. The school buildings were erected at the expense of the well-known Sir Albert Sassoon.

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True to her time, the *Risafir*, on September 16, commenced her voyage to Bussorah. My fellow passengers were a Turkish pasha going to Amara to assume the governorship, and the family of Sabit Pasha, the Governor of Bussorah, going to join their lord. As on these Turkish steamers the passengers provide their own food, I had laid in provisions for

[1] The instruction in Hebrew, I was told, was confined to writing only, and is necessary because the Jews keep their accounts in the Hebrew character.

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the voyage at Bagdad, and they were cooked and brought to me by a servant lad of that city, whose mother had a promise from me not to take him beyond Bussorah. In addition to our small private accommodation, we had a general cabin for our meals, and when the Pasha left us at Amara I had this cabin almost entirely to myself, as the family for Bussorah lived in complete isolation. If I had not been so anxious to catch the Kurrachee steamer before she left Bussorah, I should have enjoyed the voyage and the taste of Turkish and Arab company which it gave me; but the desire to get quickly to Bussorah overmastered everything else. Our captain was an Arab, who to his name Mahmood added the designation of "Capitân" to denote his office, and the way in which he commanded his little vessel, and met the many difficulties of the navigation of the Tigris, was admirable. He knew my anxiety to get quickly to Bussorah, so about the fourth day, in the hope of inducing him to make all the haste he could, I sent him a bag containing sixty Indian rupees, with a message begging his acceptance of them. The honest fellow kept the implied contract well, and on the seventh day, September 22, landed me at Bussorah. The Kurrachee steamer was still within reach, and after dining on shore with our entertainer on the outward voyage, I dropped down to Mahommerah, where she lay, and was welcomed on board by Stewart. He, poor fellow, whilst I was enjoying myself at Bagdad, had had to content himself with the much less interesting amenities of Bussorah!

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Our steamer, the *Punjab*, sailed the following day for Kurrachee, and on the second day anchored at Bushire. We were as kindly received as before by Colonel Ross, but the visit fell flat now that Persia was no longer our goal. Our interest revived, however, as we entered the pretty miniature harbour of

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Muscat, which place we had missed visiting on the outward voyage. Muscat is, in its way, an interesting little place with a history. The bold rocks with which the town and harbour are surrounded, and which are crowned with romantic-looking castles and towers; the pretty harbour, land-locked on three sides, all on the smallest scale and perfectly symmetrical, almost conveyed the idea of a scene at the theatre. Major Euan-Smith[1], the British Resident, received us most hospitably, and as I knew something of Muscat politics from my talks with Sir Richard Temple and others, I felt that Major Euan-Smith was probably right in thinking that it behoves us to give the ruler of Muscat our entire support, and not allow him to be constantly threatened and even attacked by his Bedouin neighbours. Altogether this visit to Muscat was a pleasant conclusion to our interesting but abortive expedition to the Gulf of Persia.

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On October 2 we came to anchor in Kurrachee harbour, the very day that Roberts commenced his memorable advance from the Shutargardan Pass, preparatory to fighting the battle of Charasia (October 6), and capturing Kabul three days later. I had thus got back to India too late for the first military operations consequent on the massacre of Cavagnari and his comrades, but I was still in time to relate for the *Times* many stirring events of the war, which only ended with Roberts' historical march from Kabul to Kandahar, nearly a year later.

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[1] Now Sir Charles B. Euan-Smith, K.C.B.

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CHAPTER XVI

With Roberts at Kabul

1879–80

IN his *Forty-One Years in India*, Lord Roberts has expressed surprise that people he met in England on his return from his famous march from Kabul to Kandahar appeared to think much more of that feat than of his advance on Kabul the previous autumn. To his (Roberts') mind, on the contrary, the advance on Kabul was in every respect the greater achievement of the two, more hazardous, and involving greater responsibility. In this opinion surely all military men will agree. The march on Kabul with the limited force Roberts disposed of—2,500 British, and 3,700 Native soldiers—was, in truth, a splendid piece of daring, such as modern military history affords few examples of. In front of Roberts, when he started from Khushi on his Kabul adventure, was an unknown number of Shere Ali's regular regiments [1]—backed, it was reasonable to expect, by the whole population of Afghanistan. Soldiers and tribesmen alike could supply themselves, from the Kabul magazines, with any amount of arms and ammunition; and lastly, Roberts knew his camp to be full of traitors (perhaps amongst them the Ameer, Yakub Khan) who, with professions of servility and loyalty on their lips, were really endeavouring to stimulate resis-

[1] One Nawab Khan, a Colonel of Artillery in Shere Ali's Army, and afterwards attached to Roberts' headquarters at Kabul, told me in 1880 that when Yakub Khan went to meet Roberts at Khushi the regular army consisted of 80 regiments with 300 guns—an exaggerated statement, no doubt.

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tance by proclaiming a holy war. Such were the adverse conditions under which Roberts laboured when, on October 5, his small army encamped at Charasia, a village twelve miles south of Kabul.

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The battle fought the next day was a momentous one for Roberts, and it is terrible to think what might have happened if the victory had gone to the other side. From the account he has given it appears that overhanging his camp at Charasia, and at the distance of about one mile, was a semi-circle of rugged hills pierced by a defile—the *sang-i-nawishta*,—through which ran the road to Kabul, and which also gave an outlet to the Logur River. The Afghans were occupying these hills in great force, and had many guns in position. The battle of October 6 was fought on the most approved modern lines, and Roberts' tactics were worthy of his namesake, Frederick the Great! The centre and main position of the Afghans was threatened—"contained" is the technical word—by Infantry and Cavalry under Major White, of the 92nd Highlanders (a future Commander-in-Chief in India); whilst a stronger party, under General Baker, attacked and turned the Afghan right. This turning movement, though vigorously opposed, was eventually successful, and the Afghans were driven from their main position. Then White's containing Force took the offensive, forced the defile, and captured the Afghan guns. An admirably planned and well-fought battle, in which, I am proud to say, my old regiment, the Fifth, took part.

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Roberts followed up his victory with the vigour he has constantly displayed since. The troops bivouacked on the ground won, and "at the first streak of dawn," he says, "I started, leaving Macpherson to come on with the heavy baggage as quick as he could. I marched by the *sang-i-nawishta* defile,

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where Major White explained to me his part in the victory of the previous day . . . Our rapid advance . . . had the effect I hoped it would have. On arriving at Beni Hissar . . . only two miles south of the famed citadel of the Bala Hissar, I sent out cavalry patrols to reconnoitre, who brought me the pleasing news that the Bala Hissar had been evacuated, and that the only part of the city visible seemed to be deserted." In fact the Afghans declined further fight after their defeat at Charasia on the 6th, and on the 8th of September Roberts was in undisputed possession of Kabul. It does not give a great idea of the prowess of the Afghans that they should so quickly have thrown up the sponge and acknowledged defeat; but they were apparently without a competent leader, and the attempt to raise a fanatical feeling among them had not, as yet, succeeded.

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During these stirring events, which I was disappointed in not being able to describe for the *Times*, I was making my way, under many difficulties besides distance, to the front. On landing at Kurrachee from the Persian Gulf, I found that the strictest orders were in force, forbidding the presence of Press correspondents in Afghanistan, and it was necessary for me to go to Simla and see Lord Lytton before I could get the order relaxed in my favour. So, on reaching Lahore, which I was now able to do by rail from Kurrachee, I sent my horses on by road and rail to Peshawar, and myself diverged to Simla. Lord Lytton was most kind, and personally quite willing I should join Roberts; but the Government officials were obstructive, and it was some days before I could get formal permission to go beyond Peshawar; and even then my permit was hampered by the condition that the Punjab authorities approved. My annoying detention at Simla, however, was so far fortunate, that it gave me the opportunity of making

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the acquaintance of the then Commander-in-Chief, Sir Frederick Haines, and of learning his views as to the situation of Roberts at Kabul. Roberts was such a prominent and popular figure in the Afghan war, 1879–80, that it is often forgotten how much his success was helped by the unstinted support rendered him from Army headquarters. His difficulties would have been immensely increased if this support had been less generously afforded. The delay was also fortunate because it gave my horses time to get to Peshawar; and I thus started for the front with the advantage of being efficiently horsed.

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No need to dwell on the journey from Peshawar to Gandamak, which was over the same ground that I had traversed earlier in the year. Passing the fatal Jugdulluck Hill described in a previous chapter, I spent the night in the camp of the Guide Corps in the Jugdulluck Pass, and there found Stewart, who had preceded me by a few days. Like Roberts, who has recorded his interest in seeing the Khoord Kabul Pass as the first scene of the massacre of Elphinstone's army in 1842, I had hoped to march through it to Kabul. But at Jugdulluck I found that the Khoord-Kabul route had been abandoned by Roberts in favour of a shorter and easier one by the Latabund Mountain and Kotal. Easier this route was called, but it was nevertheless too steep and rugged for the tired transport animals which Roberts was sending back to the Punjab. This was attested by the carcases of many camels, and, in particular, of three elephants, which I passed on my way to Colonel Hudson's[1] camp at Latabund. The sight of these three enormous animals lying in all the rigidity of death amidst surroundings so unlike the level plains and genial climate of India, was almost pathetic, and induced reflections

[1] The late Lieut.-General Hudson, Commanding the Army Corps, Bombay.

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on the miseries which war entails not only on man, but on beast.

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The last night, before reaching Kabul, was passed in the camp of the 28th Punjab Infantry, at Latabund, and the next day I reached my destination. At Peshawar I had received kind telegrams from General Macpherson commanding one of Roberts' brigades, and Colonel Macgregor, his Chief of the Staff. They both promised me a hearty welcome at Kabul, and both were as good as their word. The troops were now located for the winter in Shere Ali's wonderful cantonment of Sherpur, about a mile from the Bala Hissar and city of Kabul. Macgregor had got quarters assigned to me near the gateway occupied by the General. The General himself was absent for the moment with a flying column, but when he returned he welcomed me cordially. Perhaps Lord Lytton had written to him favourably of me, or perhaps he was not displeased that the brave deeds of his army would now be chronicled in the leading newspaper of the world!

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I think I am correct in saying that most of the special correspondents of the London papers had gone home when the military operations ceased after the first successes of the war. The only special correspondent with Roberts when the war was resumed was the gentleman who represented the Indian *Pioneer*. He and I were, to the best of my belief, the only special correspondents of the London and local press throughout the occupation of Kabul, and Roberts' subsequent march to Kandahar.

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At last, then, I was at Kabul, and the dream of years of frontier service was realized! I had heard and read much about the great structure which Shere Ali for years had been raising, and which it was

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understood he intended as a warning to England and Russia—particularly England — that Afghanistan would be no easy conquest to either of them. I was surprised, therefore, to find, that Sherpur was not a fortress, but a permanent camp intended for the accommodation of an army. It had in 1879 the form of a huge parallelogram, surrounded on three sides by a solid wall twenty feet high, which was protected by a second wall, or *fausse braie*, twelve feet in height. The northern side of the parallelogram was formed for the time by a low range of hills, generally called the Bimaru heights, which figured largely in the accounts which have come down to us of the disasters of 1841–42 under General Elphinstone. It may be noted, *en passant*, that the modern Sherpur occupies a portion of the site of Elphinstone's cantonment, and that portions of the latter were quite distinguishable in 1879. It was said to have been Shere Ali's intention to continue his wall so as to include the Bimaru heights in the *enceinte*. This would have made the whole perimeter of the work about 4½ miles. Clearly, then, Sherpur could add little to the defensive power of Kabul against an enemy possessing artillery, and Shere Ali's motive in building such a monstrosity is not easy to discover. Perhaps he thought to secure himself against the turbulence of his own subjects, which it would doubtless have done, or more probably it was the product of an inane vanity, which was gratified by the idea of living in the middle of his army, and in full view from his palace windows of a great park of guns: for the foundations of a future palatial building could be seen at the foot of the Bimaru heights, and the guns were found parked in the centre of the cantonment.

* * * * *

Though ridiculous as a fortress against modern artillery, Sherpur stood General Roberts in good stead in December 1879 as a defensive position against the

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formidable combination which he had to meet in that month. The unfinished portion of the eastern face was then made tolerably safe, chiefly by means of abattis and wire entanglements, and the Bimaru heights were made more defensible by six towers judiciously placed, shelter-trenches and abattis.

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The question was often discussed during our occupation of Kabul whether Roberts did right in placing his troops in Sherpur for the winter in preference to quartering them in the Bala Hissar. The prestige of the Bala Hissar is great in Afghanistan, and its occupation by Roberts' army would have been a strong deterrent in the Afghan mind against such a movement as that of December. What is more material, it commands the city, and in suffering it to fall into the hands of Jan Mahomed and his tribesmen, our cause suffered for a time a heavy blow. Roberts has given as his reason for choosing Sherpur, that there was not sufficient room for the troops in the Bala Hissar, and that its occupation was made dangerous by the immense store of gunpowder it contained. Whether these reasons were valid at the time or not, Roberts no doubt saw the advantage he had lost when both city and Bala Hissar were taken possession of by the insurgents. The city contained many friends of ours who were, of course, plundered, and the stores of the Bala Hissar were most valuable to those in arms against us. It must not be forgotten, however, that Sherpur contained barrack accommodation which was very useful to the troops, and probably much more healthy than any that could have been found for them in the Bala Hissar.

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I was not long in indulging the curiosity I felt to see the Bala Hissar, and, in particular, the building where

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poor Cavagnari and his followers had met their fate, which was so near being mine also. The Bala Hissar of Kabul is a fortress, the fame of which is great in Eastern countries besides Afghanistan. It is built at the foot of a rugged spur, thrown out from the same range of mountains which faced Roberts at Charasia, and which, under the name of Shahr-i-Darwaza, forms the natural defence of Kabul from the south. The lower part of this spur is separated from the upper by a deep chasm, and was doubtless selected by the builder on that account as the site of his fortress. From this chasm the spur rises again to a high stony knoll surmounted at the time I write of by an ancient work called the Bala Boorj (high tower). The Bala Boorj has a complete command of the interior of the Bala Hissar, and must be occupied in conjunction with it. The two are connected by a double line of wall, which affords a road sheltered from musketry fire. The Bala Boorj is again separated from the upper part of the spur by another precipitous drop of 80 or 100 feet, making it a small Gibraltar. This description will show how defensible the Bala Hissar is from an enemy unprovided with artillery, as was the case in the insurrectionary movement of the winter of 1879. From the Bala Boorj and the Bala Hissar you look down upon an expanse of flat mud roofs, and can judge how completely the city is under command.

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The walls of the building, which had been given up to the British Embassy, were pitted with bullet marks, and showed how strenuous and prolonged must have been the attack and defence. When Roberts first saw the place a month previously, "the floors were covered with blood stains, and amidst the embers of a fire were found a heap of human bones." Nothing of this kind was visible when I saw it, and I can give no harrowing description of personal relics of the

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dead such as the tent of poor murdered Maclaine afforded after the battle of Kandahar.

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When I first got to Kabul I was surprised to find how tranquil everything was and that I was able to ride through the crowded streets of the city and to explore the country round Sherpur with the same freedom as if I were at Delhi or Lahore. For some weeks after the occupation of Kabul there was no outward sign in the attitude of the population to alarm. Roberts' success at Charasia, and the severity which he thought it necessary to exercise on first coming to Kabul, had intimidated all classes, and they were waiting quietly to see what he intended to do. It was not until later that I understood how hollow the calm was, and how deep the resentment of the country generally against the foreign occupation. Roberts was doubtless better informed, and, early in December, knew that a serious movement against us was on foot, but even he was unaware of the extent of it. He was told that an insurgent body was approaching Kabul from the west, and another from the north, and that probably these two bodies would be joined later by the armed population of the valleys south of Kabul. The military experts, of whom I am not one, must decide whether the measures he took to deal with these insurgent bodies gave promise of success. They were, roughly speaking, to defeat them in succession by one column from Sherpur, and to intercept them, when defeated, by another. The plan failed, partly because Roberts' instructions were not carried out to the letter, and partly because the insurgents from the west were in far greater force than was expected. Roberts made light of the risk to which Sherpur was exposed during the operations of December 11 in the Charden Valley, when it was left for some hours almost denuded of troops; but the officer in com-

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mand was by no means free from what seemed to me very reasonable anxiety.

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Meanwhile the insurgents from the west not only escaped the defeat which Roberts intended for them, but had much the best of the conflict, and straightway proceeded to occupy a strong position on the Shahr-i-Darwaza heights. A weak effort was made the next day, December 12, under Colonel Noel Money, to dislodge them, but it failed, owing to the inadequacy of the force employed. Money's attack was resumed the next morning conjointly with a force under General Baker, which stormed the Takht-i-Shah peak from the east, meeting Money at the summit. The fight was very animating to those who watched it from Sherpur, and victory was so clearly on our side that for the time it inspired the hope that the insurgents would see their inability to cope with our troops, and disperse. But though we remained masters of the Takht-i-Shah and Shahr-i-Darwaza heights, the morning of the 14th disclosed the insurgents still defiant, and occupying, in great force, the Asmai heights to the north of the city. This Roberts would not tolerate. The Asmai heights were stormed and taken by a force consisting of some companies of the 72nd and 92nd Highlanders, and the Infantry of the Guide Corps. This brilliant affair was fully described in a telegram I sent to the *Times* (see Appendix I). But its effect was neutralized by a mishap which befell later in the day at the foot of the Asmai heights; and Roberts, now understanding how strong was the combination against him, with correct judgment called in his detached parties, and concentrated his whole Force in Sherpur.

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Safe within the defences of Sherpur, Roberts could wait to resume the offensive until he should be joined by the reinforcements which he had summoned from

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below ; and it was still not improbable that the combination against him would dissolve as soon as the tribesmen had satiated themselves with the plunder of the city and of the Bala Hissar.

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The next eight days passed without material action on the part of the insurgents. Roberts employed the time in strengthening the defences of Sherpur, and the insurgents in feasting at the expense of the shopkeepers of Kabul, and in looting the city and Bala Hissar. As all the outside detachments had been withdrawn, they were able to do this uninterrupted. Roberts must no doubt have reflected that if he had made the Bala Hissar his winter quarters instead of Sherpur, he would have been saved this mortification. But his mortification, as will be seen presently, did not last long. In the intervals of feasting and looting, the insurgents kept up a random fire of small arms upon Sherpur, but little harm was done, though I suffered personally from it by having one of my little Bagdad Arabs wounded at his pickets by a spent bullet. Mooshk-i-Alam and the Moollahs generally had a fine time of it and kept up the spirits of the insurgents by continuous incitations to a holy war, and by promises of spiritual assistance.

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During the eight or nine days that Sherpur was invested, I had the great pleasure of renewing personal relations with my old regiment, the 5th. It had served with Roberts during the first part of the war, and had done well at the Peiwar Kotal under Major McQueen[1] who succeeded me in the command in 1869. It had formed part of the force which Roberts had lately led from Kushi to Kabul, and had again done good service at the battle of Charasia, where it was attached to General Baker's turning column. The regiment had lost at the Peiwar Kotal a distinguished

[1] Now Major-General Sir John McQueen, K.C.B.

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Native officer, Subadar-Major Azeez Khan, who had been promoted by me on his merits from Sepoy to Native officer, and by my successor to the rank in which he died. He was badly shot in the knee at the Peiwar Kotal, and fell a victim to the inveterate dislike of many Orientals to the amputation of a limb, which the nature of the wound demanded according to the canons of European surgery. I need hardly say that my reappearance amongst them was very gratifying to my old comrades, both English and Native, though I found it difficult to explain to the latter what my exact position with Roberts' Army was. I think we eventually hit upon a Persian word meaning "writer of history," and decided that it conveyed with tolerable accuracy the definition of my duties! To the 5th was assigned the defence of the north-west angle of Sherpur, a weak corner, the safe-guarding of which gave Roberts some anxiety.

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After considering about attacking Sherpur for ten days, the excitations of Mooshk-i-Alam and his moollahs brought the courage of the Afghans to the requisite pitch, and on the morning of December 23, which was the last day of the fast of the Mohurrum, corresponding somewhat to the Christian Lent, the long threatened assault was delivered. As a signal a great fire was lighted at first streak of dawn on the highest point of Asmai by the hand of Mooshk-i-Alam himself. A burst of musketry fire followed, directed chiefly against the southern and eastern faces of Sherpur. Having described the attack in full detail in a letter to the *Times* dated December 23 (see Appendix II), the description need not be repeated here. By 1 p.m. the attack had been repulsed at every point, and by nightfall all the ground in the neighbourhood of Sherpur was cleared of the enemy by the energetic action of the Cavalry under General Massy. Roberts was reinforced the next day by

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General Charles Gough's brigade, which he had called up from below some days before. Thenceforward our ordinary life in Sherpur, which had been interrupted by the stirring events of the last fortnight, was resumed. The Bala Hissar and city were re-occupied without opposition, and energetic measures were adopted by Roberts to make our whole position, including the city and Bala Hissar, secure in case of any renewal of outbreak.

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I do not remember that during my ten months' stay at Kabul with Roberts' army, or on the subsequent march to Kandahar, anything in the nature of a censorship of the Press existed. It might have been different had there been many correspondents of the London Press in camp, but, as has been already said, the *Times* was the only London paper represented by a special correspondent. My intercourse with Roberts was of such a pleasant character that I was allowed by him, to my great satisfaction, as well as to the advantage of the *Times*, to put before him some of my more important letters and telegrams before despatch; and he often enabled me to make them more full and accurate. He was entitled to such a courtesy on my part, though he did not demand it, but trusted entirely to my loyalty and discretion as an officer. Amongst my most cherished memorials of the period are the notes he from time to time wrote me approving my letters and telegrams, and the manner in which I placed matters before the English public. Nor can I ever forget his kindness in mentioning me in his despatch of the events of December, and in consistently treating me as if I had been officially attached to his army.

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In writing as above about Roberts it is pleasant to me to remember that I owe much gratitude also to Mr. Lepel Griffin,[1] who, in the spring of 1880, was sent up

[1] Now Sir Lepel Griffin, K.C.S.I.

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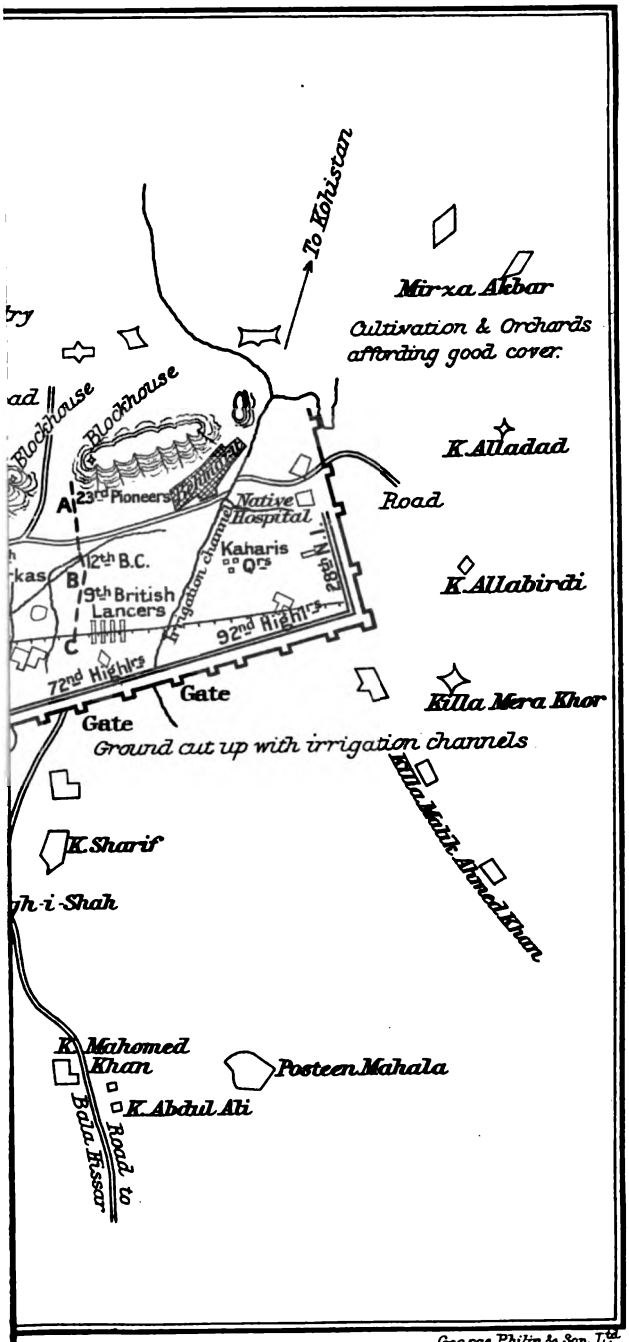
CANTONMENT OF SHERPUR.



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to Kabul by Lord Lytton as special political officer with Roberts. The idea had by that time taken root that Abdur Rahman, the eldest son of the "great Ameer" Dost Mahomed, might be the most suitable man to become Ameer of Kabul. Mr. Lepel Griffin was a happy choice for the delicate and difficult negotiations which such an idea involved, and the country is lucky in having him still in reserve for any similar duty. Lepel Griffin did for me on occasion the same service as Roberts, and so often saved me from inaccurate statements as to political matters.

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The *Times* was highly appreciative of the work I had done for the paper in the winter of 1879–80, and it is with pride that I make the following extract from a letter written to me by Mr. MacDonald about this time :—

"Though your telegrams describing the struggle round Sherpur left small apparent scope for additional description by letter, your correspondence by post a month after date was highly appreciated here ; and I can for my own part assure you that to my mind nothing so satisfactory in the shape of military narrative has ever yet been published by the *Times*. The clear statement, the good sense, and the absence of exaggeration, were all to me quite refreshing ; and if you have cherished any misgivings as to the value attached here to your communications, I beg you will dismiss them from your mind."

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Indeed, I had by this time become greatly interested in my work, and congratulated myself on having found such an alternative for the professional employment which I still longed for. I therefore passed the spring and summer of 1880 at Kabul in great contentment, always finding some interest in the city and neighbourhood, as well as in visiting the higher class

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of Afghans in their homes. The arrival of General Stewart with the Kandahar Army in April 1880, reduced Roberts for the time to a secondary place, much to my regret: for though Stewart was an old friend, I could not expect him to treat me with quite the confidence which had grown up between Roberts and me. I had, however, little to complain of, for Lepel Griffin, as I have said, was kindly disposed towards me, and as political matters were superseding military in interest and importance, Lepel Griffin's assistance was more valuable than that of the military chief.

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My mention of Abdur Rahman reminds me that as far back as February 1880 I wrote of him to the *Times* as a possible successor to Yakub, but with the reservation that as a refugee and pensioner of Russia for many years it was probable that his sympathies would be too Russian to suit our purpose. In later years I often, in conversation with MacDonald, jokingly claimed for the *Times* that it "invented" Abdur Rahman! Be this as it may, Lepel Griffin in the early summer of 1880 got into communication with him by Lord Lytton's instructions. The future Ameer had some time before obtained leave to quit his Russian asylum, and look after his interests in Afghanistan. He was now cautiously approaching Kabul. A small mission was sent by Lepel Griffin to interview him, and brought back a favourable report. The prospective Ameer was found to be what would be called by us a good "business man." His habits were methodical. He rose early and retired late, devoting the whole day to business, and—strange in an Oriental prince—he was even accustomed to draft his own letters! After this report, negotiations with him were hopefully continued, and eventually an interview was arranged to take place between him and Lepel Griffin. The little Afghan village of Zimma, twelve miles north of Sherpur, was selected for the inter-

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view, which accordingly took place on July 31; and an understanding was there and then arrived at with Abdur Rahman which led to his formally agreeing to all our conditions, and to his assuming, with our good-will and some unobtrusive assistance, the thorny crown of Afghanistan.[1] The annals of the next twenty years show how advantageous the settlement thus arrived at has been both to ourselves, and, on the whole, to the Afghan nation.

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But whilst this eventually happy settlement was still incomplete, the astounding news came from Kandahar of the annihilation of a British Brigade at Maiwand at the hands of Ayub Khan, the brother of the late Ameer Yakub, and that the British Force at Kandahar was invested. It was an infelicitous moment for such news, because it might well have had the effect of upsetting our hardly completed arrangement with Abdur Rahman, and throwing the affairs of Afghanistan again into the melting pot. Happy for us that we were dealing with a man of sense, capable of seeing matters with a calm eye, and judging the real value of a temporary success like Ayub's. Abdur Rahman held faithful to his engagements, and gave such support as his yet scarcely acknowledged authority enabled him to give to the measures taken by the Indian Government to put matters right at Kandahar. Roberts' subsequent march to that place was rendered easier by the orders Abdur Rahman promptly sent to the Afghan officials at Ghazni and elsewhere to give the Army of retribution all possible assistance.

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The measures to be adopted "to put matters right" were not adopted without some hesitation on the part of the Indian Government, which had now

[1] In the first instance "of Kabul" only. The limitation did not last long.

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passed from the firm hands of Lord Lytton into the newer hands of the nominee of the Gladstone Government, the Marquis of Ripon. Thanks, however, greatly to the disinterestedness of General Stewart and to the energetic representations of Roberts, which were freely backed by Sir Frederick Haines, orders reached Kabul on August 3 for the despatch of a force of approximately 10,000 men to Kandahar under Roberts' command. I need not say how gladly I again attached myself to his fortunes.

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CHAPTER XVII

Kabul to Kandahar—an Historic March

ROBERTS' march from Kabul to Kandahar was a feat of which Englishmen are justly entitled to be proud, but it owes some of the admiration in which it is held to the peculiar circumstances under which it was performed. It is not often in modern days that an army of 10,000 men is lost to the view of the outer world for three weeks, and is heard of at the end of that time as having won a victory which ends a war. That victory again differed from ordinary victories in the fact that it wiped out a previous disgrace which was deeply felt by the nation. This was one reason why the march to Kandahar was more thought of than the daring march of the previous year on Kabul. The one wiped out a national disgrace, the other simply avenged an act of cruel treachery.

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But though the merits of the march may have been over-estimated, yet it did great honour to both Roberts and his troops. It was no slight military feat for an army of 10,000 men to march 313 miles in 23 successive days (one halt) through a hostile country, and carrying a five days' reserve of food and everything which makes an army fit to meet an enemy in battle. True, the enemy was an Asiatic one, but it was flushed with a recent success, and was inspired by religious enthusiasm.

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Roberts was fortunate in the experience he had

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gained during the previous twelve months. No man who had come straight from years of Staff employment at Simla, as he had done the year before, could have thought out all the requirements of the Kandahar march as Roberts did. Nothing was forgotten: no requirement was unprovided for. He lessened the fatigues of the march to his soldiers by means which would not have suggested themselves to a less experienced commander. His orders for marching and camping were alike thoughtful, and such as saved the soldiers from unnecessary harass and fatigue.

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I did not wait for instructions from London to decide that it was my clear duty to the *Times* to accompany Roberts on his adventurous march to Kandahar. So on August 8, 1880, I left the rough quarters in Sherpur which I had occupied for the last nine months, and joined the Kabul-Kandahar Field Force which I found already assembled at Beni Hissar, a village two miles south of Kabul on the road to Charasia. The march opened badly for my comfort. My camp bedstead had been the victim of a collision on the way to Beni Hissar, and was reported unserviceable, so I had to be content with a bed upon the ground for the twenty-three marches between Kabul and Kandahar, and very cold and unrefreshing I found it! The Force made its first march the next morning, and a very few days under the thoughtful arrangements made by Roberts sufficed to bring everything into good working order. The first bugle sounded between 2 and 3 a.m., and the force moved from its camp about 4. At 8 o'clock there was a twenty minutes' halt, which was utilized to eat the breakfast which every one carried with him. Mine was generally a slice of tinned bacon between two cakes of the unleavened bread of India, washed down with cold tea. This reminds me of an adventure that might have had disagreeable

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consequences, which befell me at one of these breakfast halts. I had dismounted from one of my little Bagdad arabs, which during the winter at Kabul had become as tame as kittens, and, trusting to his docility, I incautiously let go the bridle whilst I fumbled at my holster. By a sudden mischievous impulse my horse threw up his heels, and galloped off before I could recover the rein. It seemed as if I should have to walk the remaining twelve miles of the march, which I was ill accoutred for doing. But some kind friends who were near pursued the truant, and when, I had walked about half a mile, brought him back to me. Poor little horse! He died the day the Force halted at Khelat-i-Ghilzai, the victim of an unwholesome ration of wheat, which had been served out that day in the scarcity of his accustomed barley.

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Seven marches brought the Kabul-Kandahar Force to Ghazni, the fortress of which figured largely in the war of 1838–42. It was taken in 1838–9 by Lord Keane, who employed the then novel, I believe, expedient of blowing open the gate by powder-bags. The expedient has often been adopted since in Indian warfare, notably at Delhi in 1857. I was once so fortunate as to hear the original feat described in full detail by the late General Sir Henry Durand, whose perilous duty it had been as a subaltern of Engineers to light the fuse. In a hurried visit to the front during the few hours of our stay at Ghazni I tried in vain to identify the gate Durand blew in, and was marching too light to have any book of reference at hand. The fort of Ghazni had, to me, another interesting reminiscence connected with it. It was held at the time of the Kabul outbreak, 1841, by the 27th Bengal Native Infantry, commanded by Colonel Palmer, an officer who had once commanded my own old regiment, the 21st Native Infantry. The fort

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was surrendered to the Afghans by Palmer after a not too creditable resistance, and the story ran that John Nicholson, the hero of Delhi, then an ensign in the 27th, broke his sword in disgust when the surrender was made. The story is quite in keeping with Nicholson's subsequent career, and is worthy of belief.

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One more memory is connected with Ghazni—the order given by Lord Ellenborough to Nott, that when in the course of his "adventurous march" he got to Ghazni, he was to bring away with him the gates of the Hindoo temple of Somnauth in Southern India, carried off as a trophy of war by an ancient Afghan conqueror, "Mahmoud of Ghazni." Great ridicule was poured upon Lord Ellenborough at the time for the order—why I scarcely know. The gates must have been a sore encumbrance to Notts' army on the march from Ghazni to the Sutlej! Whether they are still in existence, I know not, but for a long time they were preserved, I think, in the Agra Magazine.

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At Ghazni Roberts afforded me the opportunity of sending a telegram to the *Times*, but neither it nor one from the General himself got through. The English public had to wait until Roberts got nearer to Kandahar before they had tidings of the army which had so romantically disappeared from view.

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Soon after passing Ghazni we marched over the field of General Stewart's action of April 19. It was easily identified by the number of newly made Afghan graves which were scattered about. From the various accounts, public and private, which I have read, the action of Ahmedkhel was rather an Afghan attack very successfully repulsed than a set battle like Charasia. The main incident of it was a furious

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rush made by some 3,000 Ghazees, mounted and on foot, which caused a momentary confusion in Stewart's infantry. Steadiness, however, was quickly restored, and the rush was stopped; but some of the Ghazees got round the flanks, and so near to where Stewart and his staff stood as to cause the General to draw his sword. When once the rush of Ghazees had failed, the Afghans seem to have made little further effort. The accounts show that Stewart's Cavalry regiments were boldly handled by their respective commanding officers, and contributed greatly to the discomfiture of the Afghans.

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Three regiments of the Punjab Frontier Force had the good fortune to share in the action of Ahmedkhel —the 1st and 2nd Cavalry, and the 2nd (Sikh) Infantry. The last-named regiment is chiefly composed of Dogras, a Rajpoot race from the lower Himalayan hills, and of good fighting quality. A private account of the action, written by a Cavalry officer present, says, "The 2nd Sikhs behaved splendidly, and were as steady as rocks, and General Stewart complimented Boswell[1] on their behaviour after the action."

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After leaving Ghazni the country became more open, and Roberts was able for some days to form march on a broad front. The appearance of the Force when so formed was very imposing, and the broad front marched on was less fatiguing to the men than one long column of route. But indeed Roberts throughout the march was most careful to spare the troops every discomfort possible, and to provide them the best rations in his power. Officers who have marched in India will remember the cumbrous iron ovens which in 1880, and perhaps to this day, accompany British troops on the line of march. These ovens have

[1] Now Major-General J. J. Boswell, C.B.

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the form of a huge globe of iron cut into two parts. A more inconvenient or harassing load for a mule it is difficult to conceive. It was vital to Roberts to spare his mule carriage as much as possible, and these ovens were a constant source of sore-back. It was repeatedly suggested to him to drop them, and to let the men be content with the Indian substitute for the ration loaf. But Roberts was inexorable. He knew how the fresh ration loaf is valued by the English soldier, and would never consent to the ovens being abandoned. They accordingly accompanied us the whole way to Kandahar.

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This reminds me of another instance of Roberts' kind concern for his men, which has made him so popular with them. The marches were always long, and if the mornings were bitterly cold, the heat in the later hours—especially as we got nearer Kandahar—was often excessive. It was Roberts' custom to ride on ahead of his troops after the breakfast halt, in order to choose the camping ground for the night. I have often known him, after he had chosen the ground, to ride back for miles to meet the troops, and cheer them by the news that camp was near. The order would then be given for bands to strike up, and the men would finish the march with renewed spirit.

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On the fifteenth day after leaving Kabul, Kelat-i-Ghilzai was reached. The Kelat fort is famous for the gallant defence it made against the Afghans in the troubles of 1841–2. It was held by a Sepoy garrison under a gallant officer of the then Bengal Army, Major Craigie. An officer of my old regiment, the 21st, had been with Craigie throughout the siege, and had told me many particulars of it which increased my interest in seeing the place. The Afghans made one very determined effort to take the fort, but were

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repulsed in the most cheery way by the Sepoy garrison. The place held out for months until Nott, on his march back to India, viâ Kabul, relieved it and carried away the garrison with him. As Roberts halted a day at Kelat, I was able to visit the fort without the hurry which had caused me disappointment at Ghazni.

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The garrison which Roberts found at Kelat consisted of 150 men of the 66th Foot, the regiment which suffered so grievously at Maiwand, a detachment of Artillery (British) with two guns, and the 2nd Baluch Regiment of the Bombay Army, the whole commanded by Colonel O. Tanner.[1] This officer's cheery heliographic messages had for some days assured Roberts of the safety of Kelat, and kept him informed of the state of things at Kandahar. As Roberts objected to charge himself with the care of an outpost like Kelat whilst matters of such importance were ahead of him, he arranged to take Tanner's garrison with him, and it made an acceptable addition to the Kabul-Kandahar Force. The fort was made over to a local chief to hold for the Ameer Abdur Rahman.

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It may be imagined how agreeable to every one was a day's halt at Kelat. For fifteen days we had marched at the rate of fifteen or sixteen miles a day, and the stress had been great, especially upon the transport and followers. The latter are, as a class, poorly fed and clad, and are ill provided for changes of temperature, which were sometimes as great as eighty degrees in twenty-four hours. It should be added that the high plateaux of Afghanistan are swept by an almost constant wind, bitterly sharp in the early mornings even in August. In our warm coats and cloaks even we shivered in the mornings, and could

[1] Now Lieut.-General Sir Oriel V. Tanner, K.C.B.

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imagine what the ill-clad followers must suffer. The halt at Kelat enabled me to send the *Times* a telegram, which, though somewhat belated, reached London eventually.

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Roberts was now nearing the goal to reach which speedily had been the object of such strenuous exertions. Tanner had heliographed news of General Primrose's unfortunate sortie of August 16, and that Ayub had raised the siege on the 23rd. At Robat, one long march from Kandahar, Roberts was met by Colonel St. John, the political officer with Primrose, and learnt that Ayub had taken up a strong position behind the Baba Wali range of hills, from which he would probably not be driven without a fight. This was just what every soldier of the Kabul-Kandahar army hoped. It determined Roberts to make the remaining distance to Kandahar in two easy marches, that his men might be fresh to encounter Ayub on arrival.

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The final march into Kandahar was made on August 31. It might have been expected that the relieving force, which had made such an effort to come to the assistance of the Kandahar garrison, would at least have been received with the usual marks of military welcome, and that one or more of the regimental bands would have played it into camp. But this had not been thought of, and there was an unmistakable air of depression about the Kandahar garrison which struck every one. It was said in camp that on hearing that ground was taken up for Roberts' camp on the side of Kandahar nearest to the Afghan position, and therefore most exposed to attack, disapproval was openly expressed by some of the Kandahar officers, and an early change of position prophesied. In spite of these timid anticipations Roberts adhered to the position he

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had chosen, and after a short rest sent out the Cavalry Brigade to reconnoitre. The reconnoitring party was followed, on its return to camp, by a noisy and triumphant crowd of the Afghans, but Ayub's position had been ascertained with tolerable accuracy. It was screened from Kandahar by the intervening Baba Wali range of hills, which ends to the west in a low rounded point called Pir Paimal. Ayub's right and most advanced post was at the Pir Paimal point. The range itself was strongly occupied, and from it Ayub threatened our camp and Kandahar city by the passes known as the Baba Wali and Murcha.

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The man who had acted with such promptitude in the face of the formidable Afghan position at Charasia was not likely to be less energetic in attacking Ayub's position at Kandahar. Roberts' measures were quickly taken, and an order of battle arranged for the next morning. A counter-attack by the Afghans, on the camp and city of Kandahar, was provided against by stationing a body of troops, drawn from General Primrose's garrison, in face of the Baba Wali Pass; whilst two brigades of the Kabul Infantry were to make a movement to turn Ayub's right at the Paimal point. The Cavalry Brigade was to manœuvre in the Arghandab Valley, and endeavour to intercept the probable retreat of Ayub. Thus it will be seen that Roberts intended to follow at Kandahar the tactics which he had applied with such success on a smaller scale at Charasia.

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A full account of the battle of September 1, which I wrote for the *Times*, will be found in the Appendix, and need only be briefly summarized here. Roberts and his Staff took post on an eminence close to the camp, which commanded a view of the prob-

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able field of battle, including the passes through which Ayub would issue if he attempted a counter-stroke. At the right foot of this eminence was a village held by the Afghans, which was promptly carried by the 92nd Highlanders, and 2nd Goorkhas of the 1st Brigade. These regiments, with their supports, then continued their advance, expelling the Afghans from the many gardens and enclosures which lay between the village and the Pir Paimal point. The 2nd Brigade prolonged the line of the 1st Brigade to the left, and like it cleared the enclosures in its front. Both Brigades were vigorously opposed, but were never checked. They were lost to Roberts' sight when they rounded the Pir Paimal point. It was the General's intention to suspend the advance at the Pir Paimal point and to make fresh arrangements for a final attack on the Afghan main defences. But on the principle that it is right to keep a retreating enemy "on the run" it was properly decided by Major-General Ross, who was in executive command, to push on without halt. Accordingly the two Brigades continued their advance, and were soon masters of the guns and main position of the Afghans. After a further advance of about a mile, the troops came upon Ayub's camp, which he had left standing when he took to flight. Here the 1st and 2nd Brigades were joined by Roberts, with the 3rd, which had remained in position to support the turning movement. Roberts' success would have been complete if the Cavalry Brigade had not failed to keep in touch with the Infantry, and could not be launched in pursuit. By the time Roberts could call up the Kandahar Cavalry, which was watching the Baba Wali Pass, the opportunity had passed, and Ayub's retreat was unmolested.

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I had followed in the track of the 1st Brigade as soon as I lost sight of it round the Pir Paimal point,

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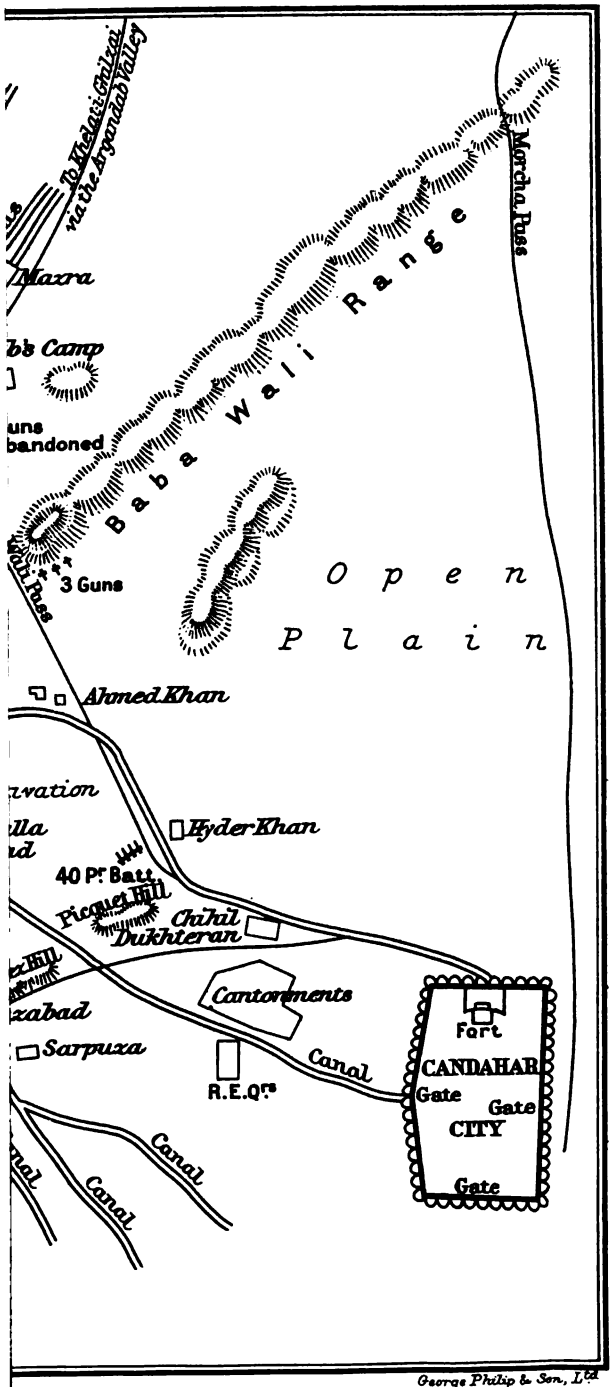
BATTLE OF KANDAHAR,

September, 1880.



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and joined it just as its work was completed. The bodies of some eight or ten soldiers of the 92nd, who had fallen in the final assault, were collected when the action was over, and laid out side by side in one of the tents left standing near the captured guns. There is something in the sight of dead Highland soldiers which is peculiarly pathetic. The picturesque garb discloses the stalwart limbs, helpless in death, which are covered in the case of less picturesquely dressed infantry soldiers. It was sad to think that those cold forms, which had toiled so bravely through the fatigues of Roberts' historic march, could not share in the triumph which ended it.

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But still more pathetic was the sight of poor murdered Maclaine's lifeless body! The story told by alleged eye-witnesses—Native soldiers, prisoners from the slaughter of Maiwand—was, that when the Afghan rout began the guard in charge of Maclaine called him out of his wretched tent, and deliberately cut his throat. Then the Sepoy prisoners, finding themselves free, took up the body, and laid it by the roadside until our troops should come up. The poor fellow's tent had been thrown down, but under it were discovered such affecting relics as his pipe, the remains of his last meal, and an unfinished pencil diary. Maclaine had been a subaltern in the battery of Horse Artillery which behaved so gallantly at Maiwand, and was made a prisoner in the retreat. The whole camp was indignant at this cowardly and brutal murder, for which Ayub must be held responsible, in spite of his declaration that he did not even know of Maclaine's death when he fled from Masrah.

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The regiments of the three Infantry Brigades formed up in Ayub's camp after the battle, and

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Roberts rode up to each in succession, and said a few words of congratulation and praise. I can never forget the cheers which each regiment, Native as well as British, gave him, and I am sure they went to his heart. It was a proud day for the soldiers too, who had crowned their laborious march from Kabul by such a signal victory, and their feelings that day as they marched back to camp must have been of the most enviable kind.

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CHAPTER XVIII

South Africa, 1881—A Bitter Pill!

AYUB KHAN having been reduced to insignificance by Roberts' victory of September 1, and Abdur Rahman having been accepted by the English Government as Ameer of Kabul, the war, which had lasted since 1878, might now be considered at an end. Roberts, who was greatly out of health, betook himself to Quetta to recruit. At short intervals, the three Infantry Brigades of the Kabul-Kandahar Field Force marched for India, and the British troops we had left behind at Kabul were arriving or had arrived at Peshawar. My duties as special military correspondent of the *Times* might therefore be considered at an end, and I expected instructions to return to England. Whilst I waited for these to arrive there was still matter of interest to communicate to the *Times*. Something had still to be told of the Maiwand disaster, the scene of which was soon visited by a brigade from Kandahar, charged to give decent burial to our unfortunate slain soldiers. It was interesting too to visit the scene of General Primrose's unfortunate sortie of August 16, which had resulted in the death of General Brooke and eight other officers. The neighbourhood of Kandahar itself afforded me many pleasant rides, and I freely explored it. If Kandahar was the scene of a misfortune to English arms in 1880, it had been the scene of much that was creditable to them in 1841-2, and Nott's successful maintenance of his position in those years must never be forgotten.

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It was not till October 24 that I received the expected notice of recall to England. Here is the telegram :— "Return to England : you have done admirably." I was quite contented with this terse expression of approval, and prepared for my long journey to India with hopeful anticipations for the future. I will, however, record that when the opportunity came for the Indian Government and the Commander-in-Chief to fix on a suitable general to command the large force to be left at Kandahar, I did indulge the idea that my name might suggest itself to them. The Adjutant-General had a note in his office of my earnest desire for re-employment, and could hardly have been ignorant that I was already on the spot. The command at Kandahar was not quite an ordinary military command, such as might be conferred without scruple upon the officer whose name happened to be first on the list. It would obviously be best filled by some one who, in addition to military capacity, knew something of Afghan character and politics. I was well known as the author of the letters and telegrams which the *Times* had been publishing for the last ten months from Kabul and Kandahar, and might be supposed to possess just the qualifications required. I had the further recommendation of having already filled with credit important military commands. Had Lord Lytton still been in office, I should certainly have made known my aspirations to him ; or if Roberts had been still at Kandahar I should, perhaps, have sought his advice. But Lord Lytton had been replaced by Lord Ripon, and Roberts was at Quetta, or farther, and I was too proud to expose myself to a possible rebuff, so I did nothing. The command at Kandahar was given to another, and I had again to fall back upon a happy natural disposition which never allowed me to grieve for long over a disappointed hope.

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Early in November, 1880, I left Kandahar and commenced the long march back to India. After a few marches my way lay through the Khojuck Pass, a defile of some difficulty between Kandahar and Quetta. It was always connected in my mind with a scathing rebuke addressed by General Nott to a certain brigadier, who in the Afghan troubles of 1841-2 had allowed himself to be repulsed at the Khojuck, when taking reinforcements to Kandahar. The anger of the fiery old general was justified, to my mind, when I saw the pass. After the experience we have since had in Afghanistan and on our own frontier, it seemed to me that the Khojuck should have presented no great difficulty to a force like that which turned back from it in 1841. All the road from the Khojuck to Quetta was to me classic ground, from the many times and various conditions in which it has been marched over by British troops since 1838. If the railway from Quetta to Chaman (the frontier village of Afghanistan) is not yet actually completed, it will not be long before the Khojuck Pass is robbed of its formidable character by the invasion of the iron horse.

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As I marched from the Afghan frontier at Chaman to Quetta, and afterwards through the Bolan pass to Sibi, I became aware of the really wonderful influence exercised by the (late) well known Sir Robert Sandeman over the country which he so long controlled as British Resident in Beloochistan. I spent two or three days with him on arrival at Quetta, and rejoiced to see an old comrade of frontier days in a position of so much dignity and usefulness. Not his word, but his very name was law amongst his rude subjects, the Beloochees!

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The Bolan pass through which my road lay after leaving Quetta has, even more than the Khyber, lost

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its former evil prestige now that it is traversed by a railway. In 1881, however, it was still an object of interest to me from the difficulties it had presented to the march of troops from the days of Lord Keane and the "Army of the Indus," until it proved such an obstacle to General Phayre's movements in the campaign just concluded, that it prevented his reaching Kandahar in time to take part in Ayub's defeat. At the time I marched through it, it was a terrible obstacle to the quick transmission of much needed supplies of food and forage for the troops still in Kandahar, and was partly the cause of a telegram from the *Times* which I found awaiting me at Sibi.

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This telegram asked me to "pause in my return until further notice, and watch the transport arrangements," namely, for the transmission of supplies for Quetta and Kandahar. Accordingly I pitched my tent for the next six weeks at Sibi, and combined my duties for the *Times* with many pleasant shooting excursions in the neighbourhood. In January, 1881, final instructions from the *Times* reached me—"Return home."

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During my stay at Sibi, that out-of-the way place had the honour of a visit from Lord Ripon, who had lately become Viceroy of India in succession to Lord Lytton. He gave me a long interview in his railway saloon carriage, and discoursed on many matters—chiefly, of course, Afghan—and particularly as to what I thought of Abdur Rahman, and whether the settlement with him would be lasting. Indeed, Afghan matters looked for some time so doubtful that the *Times* asked me to confer with a high Indian official much in their confidence, Mr. Donald McNab[1] before I left India. I was to settle with McNab

[1] Now Sir Donald C. MacNab, K.C.I.E., C.S.I., late Indian Civil Service.

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whether I should remain in India, so as to be ready, if necessary, to return to Afghanistan, or proceed to England. So from Sibi I made my way to Umballa, where McNab then was. We decided that I might safely return to England, and that Abdur Rahman would gradually succeed in consolidating his rule. In due course I got to Bombay, and engaged a passage to Trieste in an out-going Austrian-Lloyd's boat; my intention being to spend the next year on the Continent of Europe in order to obtain a thorough mastery of French and Italian.

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Let me here say a good word for the Austrian-Lloyd's steamer service to India. It was most comfortable. The ship's duties were performed without unnecessary fuss, but very efficiently. The table was excellent, and the captain and his officers were studious of the comfort of the passengers.

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I had scarcely landed at Trieste when a telegram from the *Times* was put into my hands: "If you will go for us with Roberts to Transvaal come home at once. Answer. MacDonald, *Times*, London." I telegraphed my acceptance, and was soon in London.

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The idea of being again attached to an army under command of Roberts was of course very agreeable. It, however, seemed to me that I should be rather late in the field. Roberts would be a week ahead of me in getting to the Cape. Colley's attempt to assist the Transvaal garrisons viâ Laing's Nek had failed on January 28. The desultory fight at the Ingogo had occurred on February 8; Majuba on the 27th. My passage was taken for March 15, and I could hardly reach Capetown before the second week in April. I expressed my fears to the *Times*, but though they admitted that I might be late for active military operations, yet, even if I was, information was greatly

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required as to the causes which had led up to so deplorable a conflict, and the measures in progress to bring it to an end. So I went forward cheerily.

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The first news received on arrival at the Cape was that Roberts had come and gone! That peace had been proclaimed in the latter days of March, to the intense dissatisfaction of every one but the Boers, and that a Royal Commission would sit to frame the terms on which the Transvaal would be retroceded to the Boers under its former title of the "South African Republic." As military correspondent in the field, my work was apparently over before it had begun, and I had only to turn my attention to the alternative object suggested by the *Times*.

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I therefore utilized the few days I had to pass at Capetown before I could get on to Natal in seeing some of the leading political men at the seat of government. This I had the means of doing from the excellent introductions given me in London. I saw Sir H. de Villiers, the Chief Justice at the Cape; Mr. Sprigg, the Prime Minister; Colonel Smyth, in temporary command of the troops; Sir David Tennant, and others. I tried to elicit from them their opinion of the causes which had led to the outbreak of the Boers, and had created the present deplorable state of things. And since a Commission was appointed to frame conditions for the retrocession of the Transvaal, I tried to get their opinion of what those conditions ought to be. The information I gained was utilized for my letters to the *Times*, but of course it is now out of date, and need not be recapitulated. I shall only say that they all agreed in averring that, if the war went on, the Dutch at the Cape would certainly be drawn into the struggle, so strong was (and we know is) the bond of union between

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them and the Transvaal Boers. This appears to me the only reason which can at all justify the ignominious peace of 1881, and in the light of later events we had better have faced the then risk boldly, than have had to reckon with it twenty years later.

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At Durban, where I was also detained for some days whilst I made arrangements for getting to the front, I again tried to get the views of the leading men; but for the reason I have given above it is unnecessary to record them. The bitterness of the Colonial Press at this period, and of the unofficial public, was intense at the "peace without honour" which Mr. Gladstone's Government had agreed to accept. Mr. Gladstone's effigy was publicly burnt at Capetown, and the maledictions which his name called forth in the hotels and bars of Durban can hardly be imagined. I found it the same all along the road to Newcastle, to which place I proceeded with all possible speed. It seemed not unlikely that the exultation of the Boers, and the exasperation of the colonists, might at any moment lead to a resumption of the fighting. It was an object to me also to get in touch with the high English officials, and to see something of the leading Boers. All this I could best do at Newcastle.

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The situation when, about the middle of April, I got to Newcastle was, that under the instructions he received from the Gladstone Ministry, Sir Evelyn Wood had, on March 24, concluded a treaty making peace with the Boer leaders on the basis of a promised retrocession of the Transvaal; but this treaty was to be effective only as a cessation of arms, until such time as a Royal Commission had made its recommendations as to the precise terms and conditions of the retrocession of the country. The Commissioners were to be Sir Hercules Robinson, High Commissioner

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of the Cape; Sir Evelyn Wood; and Sir Henry de Villiers, Chief Justice of the Cape; and the Commission was convened to meet on April 28. By that day the Boer leaders to attend the Commission had assembled at Newcastle, but the Commission did not proceed to business until May 10, as parliamentary difficulties detained Sir Hercules Robinson at Capetown longer than was expected. For the moment therefore I found little to do at Newcastle beyond listening to the objurgations of the disappointed troops and colonists against Mr. Gladstone, and I was glad to occupy myself in visiting some of the places made interesting by recent events.

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A visit to Laing's Nek at once dispelled the idea, prevalent at first in the British camp, that the Boer position, when Colley attacked it on January 28, had been strongly fortified. The only trace of fortifications which I, or those who preceded me, could find, was a trench about 150 feet long dug across the roadway, with a bank formed of the earth thrown up. The *Nek*—a word which I take to be synonymous with the *kotal* of Afghanistan—is the centre and lowest part of a semi-circular range of what may be perhaps called mountains, crossed by the road leading from Natal into the Transval. The Nek offered no obstacle to the wheeled vehicle in which I crossed it, and the Boers have constantly admitted that they relied so little upon its capabilities of defence that if the fire of Colley's artillery had continued a little longer they would have been in full retreat before the assault was made. This can be believed when the slight preparations they had made for defending the position are seen. A visit I made later to Majuba Hill was much more interesting.

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Majuba did not appear to me so formidable a mountain as many which our troops have encountered

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on the Indian frontier and in Afghanistan. Its ascent by Colley on the night of January 27 was nothing like so perilous or difficult as the night ascent of the Paiwar Kotal by Roberts two years before. This may be said without any disparagement of the difficulties of Colley's feat. The top of Majuba takes the form of a great cup or basin, with bastion-like projections at points in the circumference. The Boers must have worked their way up the mountain singly or in small parties, so as not to attract serious notice from the English troops till shortly before they were ready for the final rush. Their shooting must, as usual, have been very good, and as their main assault was supported by simultaneous minor attacks at various points of the hill, our men were naturally a good deal confused. The situation reminded me of that at Sherpur on December 11, 1879, when only a small body of troops was available to repel a possible attack by the Afghans on Shere Ali's immense fortified cantonment. I remember being asked on that occasion what I thought the best way of preparing for possible attack, and I did not hesitate to say that I should station the few troops available in the centre of the place, ready to fall on the first party of Afghans which showed above the parapet. In the same way at Majuba, I am surprised that Colley did not dispose his men so as to fall vigorously upon the first and any succeeding party of the Boers which might surmount the edge of the basin. But the accounts of eye-witnesses speak of a rifle combat, maintained at 40 yards' distance upon level ground, between a British and a Boer body of men. Here of course the best shooters had the advantage, and the British went under. What a chance for a resolute bayonet charge!

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I have mentioned that the Boer leaders who were to take part in the proceedings of the Royal Commission

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had been at Newcastle since April 24. I met and conversed with some of them from time to time. The one of them who at that time was supposed to possess most influence with his countrymen was our subsequent bitter enemy, Paul Krüger. This is my description of him at the time, and it is curious reading in the light of subsequent history.

"Paul Krüger's personal appearance is ordinary, but pleasant, and resembles that of a small country farmer in his Sunday clothes. His conversation is earnest and serious. There is a slight tendency to redness at the end of his nose which suggests that the somewhat puritanical tenets of the sect to which he belongs—the Doppers—do not prevent his enjoying the creature comfort of strong drink so dear to the Boer heart. There is also an habitual twinkle in his eye which indicates good humour and geniality. He is a man of little education, but of much natural intelligence and sagacity—increased doubtless by his two visits to England."

W. M. Pretorius, now dead, but then one of the triumvirate of Boer leaders, I described as being of Herculean build, and who, with his fresh complexion and blue eyes, might pass, in the markets of the North, for a substantial Yorkshire grazier. Pretorius was the son of a more distinguished man of the same name, a typical Boer, suggestive of Caleb or Joshua, who for the most trying years of Boer history, when they, like the Israelites of old, were winning an inheritance among the heathen, acted as their military and political leader. W. M. Pretorius, whose acquaintance I made, was elected as first President of the South African Republic in 1855, and again and again after.

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The most interesting of the three Boer leaders in 1881 was Joubert, and I am sorry to say I did not take any note of his personal appearance. It was

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Joubert who commanded at Laing's Nek, and who directed, though he did not share personally, in the recapture of Majuba Hill. It has always been said that he had a prescience of the certain result of the second invasion of Natal which he was called upon to lead, and that he entered into the struggle without enthusiasm, and from patriotic motives alone.

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Enough praise has not been bestowed on the gallant defence made by the various garrisons which were isolated and besieged throughout the Transvaal during the unhappy events of 1881. The garrisons of Pretoria, Standerton, Wakkerstroom, and Lydenburg kept up the British flag till the last, and never surrendered. Potchefstroom, by the disgraceful withholding by Cronje of the news that peace was made, was persuaded to surrender, when reduced to the last extremity; but the trickery practised by Cronje was admitted by the Boers themselves. The garrison was replaced subsequently, in order that it might march out with the honours of war to which it was justly entitled. The inability of the Boers to overcome the resistance of these small and isolated garrisons is a fair set-off to their successes elsewhere. Englishmen have every right to be proud of the bravery and endurance of these small isolated garrisons, just as they are of the tenacity with which Lucknow and other places were held in the Indian Mutiny of 1857; Ladysmith and Mafeking in the late war.

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During the interval between the signing of the treaty of peace about March 23, and the first meeting of the Royal Commission which took place on May 10, Sir Evelyn Wood had acted with much prudence and foresight. By Roberts' recall on his arrival at the Cape, he was left undisturbed in the command of the troops in Natal which had devolved upon him as the senior officer on Colley's death. He had called

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up to the neighbourhood of Newcastle every available soldier in Natal: horses and mules had been freely imported from abroad and sent up the country: and food and military stores had been accumulated near the frontier, so that military operations could be resumed at any moment. All this was done openly, and in sight of the Boer delegates, who were waiting at Newcastle for the Royal Commission to assemble. Wood's measures had the double effect of deterring the exultant Boers from any infringement of the temporary terms of peace, and of moderating their pretensions when the Commission began its sittings. The Commission began to sit at Newcastle on May 10, and adjourned to Pretoria at the end of the month. It sat with closed doors, greatly to the dissatisfaction of the Press, and to that of the refugee colonists from the Transvaal, who professed to see in it a design to prevent their case, and their claim for compensation, from being fully known by the public. It was in vain to tell them that it was in their own interests, and to protect them from future harsh treatment at the hands of the Boers, that their claims and complaints were to be heard with closed doors. Their exasperation against the retrocession of the Transvaal was so great that they would be pleased with nothing.

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The Commission had not sat for many days when it was apparent to everyone that peace was assured, and that the retrocession, on whatever terms, was an all but accomplished fact. I communicated this to the *Times*, with a suggestion that they should recall me, as my special duties were at an end. In truth I was heartily sick of the whole business. The refugee colonists from the Transvaal, who had collected in force at Newcastle in the hope of obtaining a favourable hearing of their case before the Commission, tired me by their vituperations

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of Mr. Gladstone and his Government. At the same time I heartily sympathized with them in the losses they had sustained by the war, and in their disgust at being transferred as subjects of the future Boer government. My hope was that I might be able to assist them on my return to England by enlisting the influence of the *Times* on their behalf; and I was glad when the *Times* approved my suggestion that they should recall me.

In the last letter which I wrote to the *Times* from South Africa, and which appeared on July 12, I gave a *résumé* of the history of the Transvaal from the time of the annexation by Sir T. Shepstone till the outbreak of the rebellion in December, 1879. This letter appeared in time for the Transvaal debate, which took place in the end of July, and I was thanked for the information it contained by more than one of the members of Parliament who took part in it. It was, I believe, the first connected account of the events which led to the resurrection of the "South African Republic," and to the creation of a State which, eighteen years later, it cost us such trouble and expense to extinguish!

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A few days after Sir Hercules Robinson and the Commission had taken their departure for Pretoria, I turned my face towards Durban and the Cape. Sir Hercules Robinson, who had received me with much courtesy on his arrival at Newcastle, gave me an invitation to pass the time I might be detained at Capetown waiting the steamer to England under the roof of Government House. I have a most pleasant recollection of the hospitality I consequently received from Lady Robinson and her daughter.

* * * * *

I arrived in England in time to be present in the House when the Transvaal debate took place in the

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latter days of July. The result in the then state of political parties was, of course, a foregone conclusion. The events of the war, and the way in which it had been brought to a conclusion, were alike mortifying to all Englishmen, except the small minority who put the success of their political party before all consideration of their country's honour and welfare. And whilst the retrocession of the Transvaal to the Boers as the result of our military defeats was distasteful to the country generally, so the terms on which the retrocession was made did not satisfy the Boers, as evinced by their subsequent efforts to get them modified. I think it is not unfair to ascribe the Boer War of 1881 to the little interest which colonial matters attracted in England until the office of Colonial Minister was assumed by Mr. Chamberlain. If the Colonial Office had been administered in the seventies of the last century with the same sense of its importance as now, the discontent of the Boers would surely have been taken into account before it grew to the point of rebellion. Shepstone's high-handed annexation of the Transvaal would probably never have taken place, and at any rate the promised Constitution would not have been withheld so long, or have been so illiberal when granted. Lastly, some check would have been put on the zeal of the tax-collectors, and pre-annexation arrears of taxes would have been allowed to lapse.

* * * * *

The kindness with which I was received by all connected with the *Times* after my return from Afghanistan and South Africa, will always be remembered by me with pleasure and gratitude. To the day of his death, in 1889, Mr. MacDonald always received me, however oppressed by the cares of his great and responsible office, with expressions of pleasure and goodwill; and I knew no greater treat than a half-hour's conversation with him on the

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public affairs of the day. I never left his presence without a sense of having learned much, and corrected my own ideas by his superior wisdom. Nor can I fail to express my gratitude to his successor for the courtesy with which he has acceded to my request to be allowed to make use in these pages of some of my former contributions to the *Times*.

* * * * *

L'Envoi

These *Notes of My Service in the Indian Army—and After*, may now be brought to a close. Whether the threefold object I had in view when I began to write them has been accomplished, my readers must judge.

I have tried to show how, after many years of regimental service, a Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army—Sir William Mansfield, better known as Lord Sandhurst—appointed me, solely on the opinion he had formed as to my merits as an officer, to command a Brigade in a force proceeding on service. How the same Commander-in-Chief, when this service came to an end, appointed me to command an important military district as Brigadier-General. How, when the misfortune of a too early arrival at the rank of Major-General obliged me, under the cast-iron rules of the service, to vacate this last appointment, Lord Napier of Magdala gave me the only *solatium* in his power by appointing me to the temporary command of the Allahabad division; and that with this appointment my strictly professional life ended. I have then shown how my unsatisfied love of my profession found relief in the acceptance of non-military, but still active employment, in which I achieved a fair measure of success; and lastly, how, in another new field, I obtained the warm approbation of men whose capacity for judging merit in that field no one can dispute. Is it not a fair inference to draw that the training which Indian service affords to its officers

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is productive of an all-round aptitude for various situations in life, a conviction which may well afford encouragement to those who are still enjoying this training.

It is possible that I have written with too much predilection and enthusiasm for that branch of the Indian Army in which so many years of my life were spent. If so, I must accept the criticism, only pleading that human nature and *esprit de corps* impel an officer to give a marked preference to that particular unit of the army in which the best and happiest years of his life have been spent.

* * * * *

In one of the preceding chapters I have spoken slightingly of what I called, "the insipidity of domestic life." I make recantation of the phrase. Domestic life need not be insipid. It has not been insipid in my own subsequent personal experience. I know the happiness of a life which enjoys perfect *camaraderie* with a wife of high intellectual gifts and womanly affection.

* * * * *

The reader will, I am sure, note with approval the absence in these pages of all allusion to domestic affairs, and that I have confined myself exclusively to matters illustrative of the objects with which they were written.

* * * * *

One last word. I am not ashamed to confess, as neither was my honoured chief, the late Field-marshal Sir Neville Chamberlain, that I am a firm believer in the great truths of Christianity, and in particular of the truth of a protecting Providence. To that Providence I am deeply grateful for protection in a life of many dangers, and that I have been permitted to live to finish this record of *Service in the Indian Army—and After*.

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Appendix I

Attack on the Asmai Heights, Kabul, December 14, 1879 (*Times*, December 25, 1879). (By telegraph.)

KABUL, *December* 21, 1879.

The events of the 14th are briefly as follows: Early in the morning great masses of the enemy defiantly took post on some lofty heights, running parallel with the west face of Sherpur, at a distance of about one mile, and called Koh-i-Asmai. This demonstration indicated that the enemy felt themselves too strong to be intimidated by their defeat at the mountain known as the Takht-i-Shah the day before. General Roberts decided on an immediate attack. General Baker[1] therefore moved out with a force consisting of some companies of the 72nd and 92nd Highlanders, the Guides Infantry, the 5th Punjab Infantry, Swinley's Mountain Battery, and four guns of Charles' Field Battery. These troops took up a position below the north end of Koh-i-Asmai, where the Koh-i-Asmai falls abruptly into a low saddle ridge, which rises again to a high conical peak. The latter is connected again with massive mountains farther to the north by means of a long saddle ridge, in which are occasional peaks. The guns were placed so as to rake the crest and east side of Koh-i-Asmai. The 72nd, 92nd, and Guides, the whole under Colonel Jenkins, of the latter corps,[2] commenced the ascent from the western or farthest side. The steady advance of these troops drove the enemy gradually to the crest of the mountain from which they kept up a continuous fire, and obstinately disputed the ground as they retreated slowly in the direction of Kabul city. At the highest peak of Koh-i-Asmai, a small party, chiefly Ghazis,[3] made a most resolute stand. Colonel Jenkins collected a considerable party of his men under shelter of some rocks, whence with great deliberation he proceeded to envelop the enemy on the apex with his skirmishers. When they were nearly surrounded he delivered an attack on the front, an attack which was most gallantly executed. One man was seen far in advance, said to have been Corporal Seller, of the

[1] The late General Sir T. D. Baker, K.B.C.
[2] Now Colonel Sir F. H. Jenkins, K.C.B.
[3] Afghan fanatics.

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72nd. All the enemy who made this last stand died at their post, and the rest streamed down the southern slopes of Koh-i-Asmai into Kabul city. Our success for the time seemed perfect.

To complete the enemy's discomfiture by a few parting shells, the mountain guns were then removed to the conical hill before mentioned, which was an important point to hold while the ulterior movements of the enemy were still doubtful. The mountain guns were supported by a company of the 72nd, a company of the Guides, and a company of the 5th Punjab Infantry. Charles' guns and the remainder of the 5th maintained their original position at the foot of the conical hill, and numerous parties of our cavalry, moving freely about the plain, intercepted fugitives, and gave a general support to the whole. In this service a troop of the 5th Punjab Cavalry greatly distinguished itself by dashing into a body of 500 Afghans. They were led by Captain Vousden, who it is hoped, will obtain the V.C. General Macpherson,[1] meanwhile, with a portion of his brigade, was occupying the heights above the Bala Hissar, whence two companies of the 67th descended, and, crossing the Kabul River, ascended Koh-i-Asmai from the reverse side, and joined Colonel Jenkins at the summit. This reinforcement enabled Colonel Jenkins to withdraw his troops some distance back in order to be ready for any ulterior operations which might be necessary.

It was not long before the presence of these troops was urgently required elsewhere. The enemy were in countless numbers, and fresh bodies of men, undaunted by the defeat at Koh-i-Asmai, now began to swarm upon the mountain described as closing the ridge to the north. From this mountain they gradually and stealthily descended, with an evident intention of assailing the mountain guns and the weak body of our troops on the conical hill. They pressed on so vigorously that Colonel Clarke, in command, demanded reinforcements from below. One hundred men of the 5th Punjab Infantry, led by Captain Hall, were forthwith lent, but the leading files were still struggling up the steep ascent when a determined advance of the enemy in overwhelming numbers obliged the defenders of the conical hill to retire. The guns could only be partially mounted on the mules before the pressure of the enemy's masses, and the difficult nature of the ground, converted the retirement from an untenable position into a confused retreat, which all the efforts of the officers failed to arrest. Two of the mules carrying the guns were shot, and before a firm front could again be shown these two guns fell into the hands of the enemy. A portion of Colonel Jenkins' force, descending from Koh-i-Asmai, checked any attempt on the part of the enemy to regain that hill, and on our

[1] The late Lieut.-General Sir Herbert Macpherson, K.C.B.

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part it was not felt advisable to attempt to recover the lost conical hill. The night coming on, and the immense numbers now clearly seen to be arrayed against us, decided General Roberts to withdraw the whole of the troops into Sherpur, and undertake no more offensive operations until the arrival of another brigade from General Bright's division below the passes should place more troops at his disposal. Orders were accordingly sent to General Macpherson to withdraw from the Bala Hissar and the Takht-i-Shah mountain, and to Colonel Jenkins to retire from Koh-i-Asmai. The latter operation was not easy in face of the swarm of marksmen who on the first sign of retirement had resumed the offensive; but the retirement notwithstanding was admirably effected through the skilful management of Colonel Jenkins, assisted by Colonel Brownlow, of the 72nd, and Lieutenant-Colonel Campbell, of the Guides; and by nightfall the whole of the troops were reunited at Sherpur.

The effect of General Roberts' resolution, of the prudence of which there can be no doubt, has naturally given the enemy the temporary possession of the city and the Bala Hissar. The political effect of this is of course a matter of regret, but the disadvantage will be short-lived. General Charles Gough's brigade, which has been ordered to march at once to Kabul, will arrive here shortly. Some difficulties, not understood here, have delayed the march, as the troops should have arrived to-day.

General Charles Gough brings with him the detachment now at Latabund, and his arrival will add one British, two and a-half Native regiments, and eight guns to General Roberts' strength.

This will enable him, without any fear for the safety of the supplies and military stores collected in Sherpur, to recommence active operations against the enemy. The first move will be to eject them from the Bala Hissar and city. This effected, the troops may be spared further offensive effort for the winter, and it is possible that the combination against us, which is not believed at present to be national, and seems only feebly religious, will collapse altogether. Within the last few days the combination has already apparently lost much of its strength.

The whole force regrets the loss of the gallant Major Cook, V.C., of the 5th Goorkhas, who died yesterday of wounds received on the 12th.

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Appendix II

The Afghan Attack on Sherpur, December 23, 1879 (*Times*, February 6, 1880).

KABUL, *December* 26, 1879.

The general form and appearance of Shere Ali's great straggling cantonment of Sherpur are probably familiar to those who have followed with any attention the progress of our troops in Afghanistan. It takes the shape of a huge parallelogram, the long sides of which lie north and south. The length of the long sides is about 2,700 yards, and of the short sides 1,100. When our troops entered it in October the west and south faces only were completed, and even these were much out of repair. The north side was and is still formed by the Bimaru heights—a round-topped ridge of hill, broken in the centre by a broad gorge, and rising perhaps 800 feet above the plain. The fourth side—that on the east—was only partially completed. It has since been completed by us to a certain extent by the erection of a low line of single-storied barracks, intended for a native regiment.

Shere Ali's original design is believed to have been to carry the walls all round the Bimaru heights, and thus to form a great square with the heights in the centre, upon which he had already laid the foundations of a citadel. He had also laid the foundations of a palace for himself at the southern foot of the heights.

What was the ultimate object of this ambitious design can only be conjectured. It was possibly part of the same idea which led him to devote such pains to the manufacture of guns, of which when the war broke out he possessed no less a number than 379, of which 34 were of siege calibre, 145 field, and 150 mountain. It has also been found from examination of the magazine records that he possessed no less than 50,000 small arms of sorts, of which all but about 12,000 were either English or cleverly imitated, like many of his guns, from English models by native artificers. It has even been conjectured that, either by way of strengthening his hold upon his subjects, or of preparing for a contest which he believed to be sooner or later inevitable, either with England or Russia, he contemplated the removal of the Bala Hissar and city of Kabul itself into Sherpur. He was quite astute enough to know that, notwithstanding its reputation throughout Asia for strength, the Bala Hissar was, from its

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commanded position, at the mercy of modern artillery; whereas Sherpur, in the middle of an extensive plain and uncommanded by hills, offered greater facilities for defence.

The ease with which Sir F. Roberts obtained possession of Kabul and of the Bala Hissar in October, and the apparent voluntary disbandment of the greater part of the Afghan army, led General Roberts to think that he might make the comfort of his troops the first consideration, and be indifferent to the advantage of the moral effect which the occupation of the Bala Hissar was acknowledged to produce. The explosion of a portion of the magazine, and the difficulty of disposing promptly and safely of such a store of powder as the Bala Hissar contained, helped, of course, the General's decision in favour of Sherpur. Nor was there wanting a still stronger reason for the choice of Sherpur.

The accommodation which the Bala Hissar afforded was thought insufficient for lodging the whole of the troops. To have placed a portion of them in the Bala Hissar and a portion in Sherpur—the only other place available—would have been manifestly unwise, and in the highest degree unsafe, the defensive capabilities of Sherpur, if weakly garrisoned, being considered.

For some weeks the apparent acquiescence of the people in the new condition of things, and the absence of all political or religious excitement, justified the General's action. The objects to be attained were to get the troops under shelter in one place before winter, and to collect supplies. Both these objects were in fair course of attainment when the late combination began to take definite form. In the meanwhile a third object—that of making Sherpur a fairly defensive position—was postponed as the least urgent of our wants.

Thus it came to pass that when, notwithstanding two striking successes on the 13th and morning of December 14, the conviction forced itself on General Roberts that until reinforcements reached him offensive movements were beyond his strength, and that he must assume a purely defensive attitude in Sherpur, he found that he had to face the fact that the position was still destitute of much that was necessary for defence, and that a resolute attack at certain points would tax all the powers of his excellent troops to repel. There is no denying that the night of Sunday, the 14th, was one of very considerable anxiety to all who knew the imperfection of the existing defences, and the many points vulnerable to attack. The situation, however, was boldly faced. That very night something was done to give the troops shelter at the more exposed points in case of attack, and to dispose them where they could most readily form and rally if the enemy had the courage to come on. But the enemy were probably too busy with their numerous dead and wounded, too tired, and too pleased at having at last

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got free access into the city, to care to make any further movement that night. Their opportunity was thus lost, for at 9 a.m. on Monday all the troops were ordered to parade for work, and by evening considerable progress had been made in making good the deficiencies of the defence.

A permanent scheme for the defence of Sherpur had been elaborated by Colonel Perkins, the Commanding Royal Engineer, early in November, but for the reasons above mentioned this had been held in abeyance. Its main feature was the fortifying of the Bimaru heights, the key of the position, by a system of breastworks and batteries requiring 1,300 men. A subordinate scheme was also proposed by Colonel Perkins, which, while forming a portion of the above larger scheme, confined the ordinary defence of the ridge to ten towers, each garrisoned by ten men. When the troops were concentrated in Sherpur on December 14, this subordinate scheme had been partially carried into execution, but was still very backward. A line of breastworks below the crest of the hill on the outer slope was the most urgent requirement; and strong working parties were at once set to work upon it, emplacements for guns at carefully selected points being also prepared. Simultaneously with this, working parties were employed upon the gateways in the south and west faces. These were four in number—namely, three in the south, and one in the west face. They were barricaded, and the means of firing from them provided. The defences on these two—the finished—faces consisted of, first, a wall averaging about 12 ft. high, with banquette and parapet, and separated from the inner wall by an interval of about 30 ft. Next, the main wall, about 20 ft. high, on the inner side of which were built the flat-roofed barracks of the troops, which formed a banquette to the main wall. The numerous irregular entrances through the walls which had been made in peaceful times for convenience of exit, or which had made themselves in the course of natural decay, were built up. The parapets of the outer wall were repaired, and ramps and ladders provided to give easy access to them. Thus the existing defences of the south and west faces were made temporarily secure in the course of Monday. There remained, however, two or three points in the defences which gave Sir F. Roberts much anxiety and which demanded time for their completion.

The village of Bimaru lies at the foot of the eastern end of the Bimaru heights. It fell within the natural line of the defences; but the Engineer officers were much troubled in dealing with some outlying houses and buildings of the village, which afforded cover close up to the defences. These were eventually either levelled or converted into shelter for detached marksmen; but this demanded time, and it was by no means certain at first that the

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enemy would afford it. The whole of the eastern face, too, was at first extremely weak, consisting mainly of a low barrack erected by the 28th Punjab Native Infantry, which was not even provided with a permanent parapet. It received some assistance, however, from a small high fort, used as a native field hospital, and from another fort beyond the *enceinte* near the south-east angle, which was held as a redoubt, and which gave a flanking fire upon the wall of the barrack. Abattis was largely used on this face, and indeed everywhere; and fortunately the numerous orchards and gardens in and about Sherpur afforded ample material, while the employment of the trees for this purpose, regrettable for some reasons, had often the advantage of diminishing the cover for the enemy. There was also an anxious corner for the Engineers at the north-west angle of the defences, where a broad gap intervened between the fall of the Bimaru heights and the western line of barracks. This was closed by a ditch and parapet made of the wheels of the captured guns, interlocked and embedded in earth; it was further strengthened by abattis, and by an entanglement made of telegraph wire.

Each day from Monday to Monday saw some improvements added to the defences, the enemy—or, as it will be more proper to call them henceforth, the "Ghazis," that is, fighters for the Faith—confining themselves to a daily distant fusillade from the shelter of walls and gardens, and showing clear signs of irresolution and disunion.

Simultaneously with the progress of the Engineers' works, Colonel B. Gordon, commanding Royal Artillery, had been most active in planning and adding to the artillery power of the defence. The field artillery attached to Sir F. Roberts' force consists of six muzzle-loading rifled 9-pounder guns of F Battery A Brigade of Royal Horse Artillery, six similar but slightly heavier guns belonging to G Battery 3rd Brigade Royal Artillery, four 7-pounder mountain guns, Morgan's Battery, and the same number of Swinley's—in all, 20 guns. Among the guns captured during the campaign were a complete battery of siege guns presented to Shere Ali some years ago by the British Government. This battery consisted of four smooth-bore 18-pounders and two 8-inch howitzers. These were forthwith pressed into the service of the defence and mounted in various parts of the works, their final position being on the south face. For the heavy guns some ammunition had been found in the tumbrels, and some more was found scattered about the place. In all, about 200 round shot and 160 common shell for the 18-pounders, and 140 common shell for the howitzers, were available. The fuse holes of the shell were of all sizes, and the Afghan fuses were quite unreliable, so the 18-pounder shell were

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filled with sand, plugged, and used as round shot, our own fuses, wrapped round with waxcloth to make them fit, being used for the howitzers. Grape was improvised by making a foundation of 3-pounder shot, filling the interstices with old bullets, placing a piece of wood the size of the bore at the top and bottom, and sewing the whole up in any cloth procurable. Besides this heavy battery Colonel Gordon selected from the captured guns four 7-pounder mountain guns of Afghan manufacture. They also were mounted on the south face, but the ammunition was very bad and unreliable, and it was only occasionally that during the attack on the 23rd they placed a shell with any effect.

The troops were allotted for the defence as follows:—The 3rd Sikhs, the 5th Goorkhas, and a wing of the 23rd Pioneers held the Bimaru heights, each that portion nearest its own lines; the Guides held Bimaru village; a detachment of the 28th Punjab Infantry the field hospital and adjoining defences; the 67th Foot had a company in the redoubt near the south-east angle; and what was left of the 67th, 72nd and 92nd, after deducting the reserve, held the parapet and three gateways of the south face.

The west face and the General's gateway were held by the Sappers, some marksmen from the British regiments, and the 5th Punjab Infantry, the latter regiment being also answerable for the defence of the gap at the north-west angle. The reserve, which was under General Baker, consisted of the 92nd Highlanders and a wing each of the 67th and 72nd, one mountain battery, and six squadrons dismounted cavalry at night. The ordinary post of the reserve was in rear of the gorge which divides the Bimaru heights in two. Brigadier-General H. Gough commanded from this gorge to Bimaru village, Colonel Jenkins the village, Brigadier-Generals Macpherson and Massy and Colonel Brownlow, of the 72nd, divided the ground between them from Bimaru right round to the General's gateway, and Major-General Hills, whose office as Military Governor of Kabul was in abeyance, commanded from the General's gateway to Bimaru gorge, where he met Brigadier-General Hugh Gough.

General Roberts' own operations during this week of expectation and preparation were confined to occasional reconnaissances by the cavalry, the bombardment of one or two of the small forts from which the enemy gave annoyance, and an attempt to keep the enemy's too near approach on the south face in check by holding what is called the King's garden. It was found, however, that the latter attempt only drew the enemy on, and increased the annoyance to the interior of Sherpur from their fire. It was, therefore, not persisted in.

The troops slept either at their breastworks or on their alarm posts every night from December 14, and hardly an evening

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passed without the officers being warned that an attack might be expected in the course of the night. Indeed, the inactivity and irresolution of the enemy surprised every one, though those who were thought to know the character of Afghan warfare best were incredulous of the Ghazis making a night attack, believing that the cold, which was most severe, would incline them to remain snug in the city and villages, at least until the sun warmed them into life and vigour. Even then, though repeated reports told of the preparation of scaling ladders in great numbers, the best-informed believed that it was mere bravado, and that the Ghazis were, as a body, wanting in that daring bravery which would bring them face to face with Martinis and Sniders behind even such improvised defences as those of Sherpur.

On the evening of Monday, the 22nd, however, information reached Sir F. Roberts of an intended attack at daybreak the next morning which was so positive that it could not be otherwise than believed. It was said that, under the authority of the religious head of the combination, one Mooshk-i-Alim, a moollah of great reputation and sanctity from the neighbourhood of Ghazni, a beacon fire would be lighted on the shoulder of the Koh-i-Asmai hill a little before daybreak, and that a general attack would immediately follow. It had been noticed in the course of Monday that large bodies of men, with the indispenable banners, were collecting in all the villages adjacent to the eastern face of Sherpur. These were believed to be Kohistanis, who would thus find themselves on the direct line of retreat if the attack failed. The south face, it was justly surmised, would be attacked by the Logar and other tribesmen, who maintained their usual quarters in the city and its suburbs. Accordingly, late on Monday evening the final warning was sent to all the troops to be on the alert at 4 a.m., and the result was awaited with perfect composure and confidence. At the first streak of dawn the expected beacon fire blazed up in full sight of the expectant troops, and a few minutes later shots were heard in several directions, as the troops on the southern face saw, or fancied they saw, bodies of the Ghazis in motion. This was succeeded by continuous volleys of musketry from the field hospitals and adjacent defences in the direction of Bimaru village. These intermitted, but were soon again resumed, with artillery fire at intervals, and an irregular fire from the southern parapets. All these indications of a serious attack continued during the next two hours—the firing occasionally ceasing, and being again resumed with more or less vigour. The telegraph and heliograph were now in full work between General Roberts at the western gateway and the various officers commanding the different parts of the defences. From these it was learnt that

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the attack was hottest at the part defended by the Guides—namely, Bimaru village and the eastern end of the Bimaru ridge, where General Hugh Gough commanded. The last officer was struck full in the right breast by a spent bullet, which was stopped by his posteen, and thus saved from anything worse than a severe contusion.

About 9 a.m. it was reported that the Ghazis had taken possession of a small village outside the defences, and just under the eastern end of the heights, and that the fire of the field guns which could be brought to bear was ineffectual to dislodge them.

To the main point of attack, thus clearly indicated, General Baker had already directed a considerable portion of his reserve, both infantry and guns. A wing of the 3rd Sikhs was also withdrawn to the neighbourhood of Bimaru from the western end of the heights. All this time a very heavy musketry fire was being maintained upon the south-east, south, and south-west fronts of Sherpur, and large bodies of men, encouraging one another with wild yells, were making demonstrations of attempting an escalade. These were, however, subjected to a heavy and constant fire from the four 18-pounders, with occasional shells from the 8-in. howitzers and Afghan mountain guns, and General Roberts felt that the danger of anything serious in this quarter might be disregarded. He therefore determined to deal at once vigorously with the Bimaru attack, and, as a first step, to expel the Ghazis from the small village outside. Four guns of the G Battery, 3rd Brigade, supported by the 5th Punjab Cavalry and some of the 5th Goorkhas, were accordingly pushed through the gorge on the Bimaru ridge into the plain to the north, and directed to bring a cross fire upon the village. The effect of this order was soon very apparent. The fire from the village, which had been exceedingly hot, slackened, and about 11 a.m. the General received information that the Ghazis were leaving the village, and a little later that a general retreat of the Kohistani portion of them had commenced, and that they were streaming off in the direction of the nearest pass into Kohistan. Upon this General Roberts gave orders for the whole of the cavalry to move out in pursuit under General Massy, and, proceeding himself to the heights above Bimaru village, made immediate arrangements for occupying the villages deserted by the enemy and for expelling them from those to which they still clung.

The cavalry meanwhile made a wide circuit round the east side of Sherpur and succeeded in intercepting the rear of the Kohistani fugitives, who were sabred by the 5th Punjab Cavalry. This movement of the cavalry shook the courage of the Ghazis in all the other villages on the east and south-east; and, as if

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afraid of having their retreat to the city cut off, they streamed out of one village after another, hastening to get upon the Siah Sang hills, and so reach the city. The cavalry were, unfortunately, too far off to profit by this opportunity; but the Ghazis were raked by the fire of all the guns which could be brought to bear, and the fugitives from the nearer villages were exposed also to the fire of the Martini rifles from the walls. All the villages by which the Ghazis might annoy the march of General Charles Gough's brigade between the Logar bridge and Sherpur the following morning were then entered by infantry parties, the defences of some blown up, and others occupied. It was in the course of the former service that Captain Dundas and Lieutenant Nugent were unfortunately killed by the untimely explosion of a mine, to the great regret of the whole force, to whom they had rendered most important service by their zeal and activity in pushing forward the work of hutting and strengthening the defences.

The cavalry, continuing their victorious advance right round the eastern face of Sherpur, ascended the Siah Sang hills, and there the 9th Lancers and the 5th Punjab Cavalry did further execution among the Ghazis fleeing to the city. It was the impression of those who watched General Massy's progress that the cavalry were well handled this day, and particularly the 5th Punjab Cavalry, which was in front, rendered excellent service. Massy's chance would have been greater had the cavalry been sent out half an hour earlier; but it would have been imprudent to weaken the interior defence sooner. Nor should it be forgotten that the Kohistanis were in very large numbers, and that, though foiled, they had received this day but little punishment. Such at least is the generally received opinion derived from the comparatively small number of dead left upon the ground. The success of cavalry against resolute and well-armed infantry, even when in retreat, is not a certainty, and a check here would have gone far to neutralize the effect of the defeat inflicted at the defences. It is more to the purpose to regret that Massy's cavalry were not in the right place when the stampede commenced later in the day from the villages between Sherpur and the Siah Sang hills, and that the Ghazis were only punished by the guns and rifle fire.

In the course of the afternoon clouds of dust in the direction of Butkhak had given intimation of the approach of General Charles Gough's Brigade, and his camp was soon afterwards descried pitched within easy distance of the bridge over the Logar river, about six miles from Kabul. The arrival of the anxiously-expected reinforcements on the morning of the 24th was therefore now a certainty.

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APPENDIX II

In the course of the night of the 23rd information reached Sir F. Roberts that the religious and military chiefs of the combination had fled from Kabul, and that all those in arms against us had dispersed to their homes. The city and Bala Hissar were accordingly re-occupied the next day, the latter only temporarily, in view of the possibility of its having been mined. The appearance of the city was most miserable—the shops plundered and defaced, the bazaars deserted, and all business suspended. Captain Hall, with one company of the 5th Punjab Infantry, took post for the night in the Kotwallee, which up to the previous evening had been the head-quarters of the Ghazis. They had shown their spite before leaving by doing as much damage as possible to the Kotwallee, and by defiling all the adjoining houses and shops. General Hills, the military governor of the city, resumed his functions on the 25th, and it need not be said was heartily welcomed by the peaceable and well-disposed inhabitants.

It is impossible not to mention with the warmest admiration the behaviour of the British and Native troops and their officers of all ranks during the labours and hardships of the eight days of which an imperfect account has been given above. All, including the regimental and many staff officers, slept every night with arms in their hands at the various breastworks and defences, and it was not until snow fell on the night of the 18th that the scantiest allowance of tents was permitted to be pitched. But it is the privilege of the General, not of the special correspondent, to bring the merits of the troops to the notice of the authorities and of the country.

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Appendix III

The Events at Kabul of December 1879 (*Times*, February 9, 1880).

KABUL, *January* 4, 1880.

In the hurry of passing events, and in the desire to give a concise general account of operations which covered a considerable field, it has happened that some matters have been imperfectly related, and that many incidents which may be thought interesting have not received mention at all. It is the object of this letter to supply these deficiencies.

Little or nothing has been told of the proceedings of Generals Macpherson's and Baker's columns, sent out on the 8th and 9th of December respectively. It will, perhaps, be remembered that Sir F. Roberts' object in sending out these brigades was to strike successively at two assemblages of malcontents who it was believed were about to join hands. One of these had been formed originally near Ghazni, and was under Mahomed Jan, an officer of the late Ameer's artillery. It had advanced to Maidan, about twenty-five miles from Kabul, and was slowly approaching the capital. The other was promoted by one Meer Butcha, an influential Kohistan chief, and was believed to be still hesitating to advance. Macpherson's orders, accordingly, were to try and draw on the Ghazni assemblage and bring it to action, while Baker by a circuitous movement should get in its rear and cut off the retreat upon Ghazni. This plan, admirable upon paper, was formed upon an imperfect conception of the numbers in course of array against us, and perhaps in a too sanguine view as to the possibility of concealing our designs in a country where information is as difficult to be obtained by us as it is certain to be conveyed to our opponents. It was also liable to be disconcerted if—as actually happened—Macpherson should find himself obliged to strike first at the approaching Kohistanis and thus be thrown out of co-operation with Baker. On the 10th, the information he received of the Kohistanis obliged Macpherson to alter his plans, and leaving the Chardei Valley and road to Arghandeh to strike his first blow at them. The Kohistanis seem to have either been unaware of Macpherson being so near, or else they accepted the combat in the belief that they were

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strong enough to beat him. The former supposition seems probable, as two companies of the 67th, under Major Baker, and two companies of the 5th Goorkhas, under the lamented Major Cook, V.C., are said to have burst upon the advance of the Kohistanis unexpectedly at a distance of only fifty yards. The Kohistanis immediately turned and fled towards their main body. They were vigorously pursued by the above few troops, aided by two mountain guns, and supported by three companies of the 3rd Sikhs and a squadron of the 14th Bengal Lancers on the right. The demoralization of the Kohistani advanced guard communicated itself to the main body, who occupied a strong position two miles to the rear, covering the village of Karez. After a resistance, which, if "stubborn," as reported by Macpherson, was shortlived, these also fled, and the troops bivouacked for the night at the village of Karez, the inhabitants of which showed themselves very friendly. Though not so understood at the time, it is probable that the Kohistanis engaged by Macpherson were only an advanced guard, as subsequent events showed that they eventually came up in very large numbers, and the determination they showed on the 23rd is not consistent with the main body of them having fled ignominiously before Macpherson's small force.

The news of General Macpherson's affair with the Kohistanis on the 10th probably led General Roberts to anticipate that he had henceforth only to deal with the Ghazni body, and that the Kohistanis might, for the present at least, be neglected. He, therefore, sent orders to Macpherson to march the next day towards Arghandeh by the north side of the range of hills which closes the Chardei Valley to the north, and instructed Brigadier-General Massy to pick up Macpherson's cavalry and battery of Horse Artillery which had been left in camp at Killa Afchar, about five miles from Sherpur, and, keeping in the open Chardei Valley, combine his movement towards Arghandeh with that of Macpherson. It was in carrying out these orders on the 11th that Massy found himself, with Horse Artillery and Cavalry only, in presence of the immense wave of Ghazni insurgents which had been gathering strength from every village *en route*, and was coming on with a vigour and confidence which showed how erroneous was the calculation that it would fall an easy prey to the collective forces under Baker and Macpherson.

It is unnecessary to recur again at any length to the unhappy events of the 11th, so far as relates to the misfortune which befell the artillery under General Massy, and whatever is said shall be rather by way of solace than of unkind criticism. It was very natural that, seeing only a small number of the Afghan Infantry, and believing that the enemy were in a fair way of

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annihilation between General Macpherson's and Baker's forces, Massy should have opened his guns upon them while still a mile and a half off, and trusted to the support of infantry, which, though invisible to him, he was justified in assuming could be at no great distance. He had no reason at first to anticipate either the numbers or the confidence with which he was about to be assailed. When these were recognized he was irretrievably compromised in ground so difficult and so unfavourable to the free movement of artillery. The line of retreat which the circumstances indicated was different from that by which Massy had advanced, and its features were unknown to him. A charge of the cavalry was clearly of necessity demanded, and the losses of the 9th Lancers and the 14th Bengal Lancers showed that it was delivered without any flinching on the part of those regiments, which were gloriously led by their respective officers, Lieutenant-Colonel Cleland and Captain Neville. When this charge failed, owing to the overwhelming numbers and determination of the Afghan Infantry—when gun after gun fell into inextricable difficulties, and when a second charge, made with diminished numbers, also failed—it was inevitable that the guns should be abandoned, and it was not wonderful if young and untried soldiers lost their heads, and in dismay at the loss of their guns rode from the field with some precipitation and confusion. It is gratifying to think that the triumph of the Afghans was rendered incomplete by their inability to remove the guns, and that under the cool and resolute guidance of Colonel Macgregor, the Chief of the Staff, they were soon again in our hands. Major Badcock, the head of General Roberts' Commissariat, Captain Deane, of the Military Secretariat, and Lieutenant Liddell, A.D.C. to the Viceroy, who were all three in the field as volunteers, with Dr. Lowe of the battery, and Captain Mathews of the Survey, assisted in the recovery and extrication of the guns, and are entitled to share in the credit.

Macpherson's movements during the 11th are not easy to follow. They were dislocated from those of Baker, and seem to have been made in complete ignorance of the formidable character the movement against us was assuming, and under the happy confidence derived from the ease with which he had scattered the Kohistanis the previous day. He heard Massy's guns and did his best to come to his aid, but was too late. He passed over the field of the cavalry charge, and though he missed the abandoned guns, he recovered some of the bodies of the slain. It may be surmised that the preachings of Mooshk-i-Alim had by this time wrought an effect all over the country between Ghazni and Kabul and in the Kohistan; and the peasantry, under their petty local leaders, were hurrying from all directions towards the

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Chardei Valley, where the fanatical Moollah awaited them with a strong nucleus of Afghan regular Sepoys. Probably the great Moollah himself and the main body of his most ardent supporters were Massy's assailants, and if the original plan could have been adhered to would have encountered Macpherson. After their success against Massy, this body seems to have divided—a part making for Kabul, and a part for Indikee and the remoter Chardei villages. Macpherson appears to have come upon the rear of the former body and to have succeeded in bringing it to partial action, and on its giving way to have turned upon other bodies, which were approaching, as has been said, from all points of the compass. He was little aware, while thus, as he afterwards described it, "hunting" the enemy, how critical was the state of things at Sherpur, which was almost denuded of troops; and how necessary it was becoming that our scattered forces should be promptly drawn together. His intention even was to bivouack at Killa Kazee, ten miles from Kabul, for the night; but, happily, General Roberts' orders reached him late in the afternoon to return at once and encamp at Deh-i-Mazung.

The next day was one of great interest and expectation in Sherpur. It was known that Macpherson had received orders to attack the enemy and dislodge them from the Takht-i-Shah, a lofty peak, the highest point of a ridge of mountains which, commencing near the battlefield of October 6 at the Sang-i-Nawishta defile, ends precipitately at the Kabul river near Baber's tomb, and is continued at the opposite side of the river by the Koh-i-Asmai heights. The gap formed between the two ridges by the Kabul river is what has been called in previous letters the Deh-i-Mazung defile. It has only to be added that the Takht-i-Shah ridge throws out two long spurs on its east and west sides—the former to Benishuhur, the latter to Indikee in the Chardei Valley. Both these villages were rallying points for large numbers of the Ghazis, and while they afforded comfortable shelter for them at night, the roads from them up the ridge towards Takht-i-Shah and Kabul were tolerably easy and convenient. The Takht-i-Shah was the nearest point to which the Ghazis could approach the city of Kabul, while we still retained possession of the heights immediately above the Bala Hissar. The latter was the position which was so firmly held on the night of the 11th by a picket of the 72nd and 67th under command of Captain Jarvis of the latter regiment. Captain Jarvis was erroneously said in a former letter to belong to the 72nd, and the mistake is now corrected.

It is a curious illustration of the misapprehension which still generally prevailed as to the seriousness of the movement against us that the force told off by Macpherson to attack this lofty and

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commanding point called the Takht-i-Shah, which was seen from Sherpur to be covered by the enemy with some eighteen or twenty standards, was two mountain guns and 150 of the 3rd Sikhs, to be joined by as many of the 72nd as could be spared from the picket hill. A wing of the 5th Goorkhas was subsequently added, but only 100 of the 72nd could be furnished by the picket, and the whole force was probably not more than 450 men. It was under the command of Colonel Noel Money, of the 3rd Sikhs, whose gallant defence of the Shutargardan has made his name familiar in England. Money's advance was hidden from the spectators in Sherpur by the picket hill, but the motions of the enemy could be clearly discerned by glass; and the heavy fire they kept up and the large numbers they showed were quite sufficient to convince those who looked on that Money's task was no easy one. The fire of Swinley's two guns appeared most effective, and the shells seemed to burst with beautiful accuracy; and to those who looked on at such a sight for the first time it appeared as if the defenders must be suffering most severely. But the more experienced knew that the rough hillside with its rocks and boulders affords endless protection from artillery fire, and that at each flash from the guns such shelter would be promptly sought. Money's advance must have commenced about twelve o'clock, but the distance to be traversed before the final assault could be delivered was great, and that and the necessity for keeping the men under cover as far as possible until within striking distance of the summit were sufficient to account for the slow progress the attack made. About half-past three the guns ceased to fire from want of ammunition, and it became known that General Roberts had ordered the advance to be suspended till the next morning when he proposed to aid it by an attack in force from the Benishuhur side. Money was, therefore, ordered to bivouack for the night on the ground he had won, which was under shelter of a subordinate peak, separated from the summit held by the enemy by a deep precipitous drop, between which and the final point of attack there was a tolerably level neck of ground devoid of cover, leading to the final ascent. It may give some idea of the hardships which the troops have had to undergo to say that the men in this advanced position on a lofty mountain passed the night without food or bedding, and that Colonel Money and Lieutenant-Colonel Lockhart, the Assistant-Quartermaster-General, passed the December night in the clothes they stood in, covered only by a tarpaulin. It was just as the final arrangements for the night were being made that Major Cook, V.C., a gallant officer of the 3rd Sikhs, received a severe wound, which has since proved mortal. Lieutenant Fasken, of the 3rd Sikhs, and Lieutenant Ferguson, of the 72nd, were also wounded, the

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other casualties of the day being four killed and ten wounded.

Something must now be said of General Baker's movements since he left Sherpur on the 9th. He encamped that night near Charasia, the scene of Roberts' battle earlier in the year. On the 10th he moved by a most difficult road to the neighbourhood of Maidan, and became aware that large numbers of the enemy from the Zurmat Valley south of Kabul were marching parallel to him on his left, presumably on their road to join the Ghazni insurgents. The march was long, and lay through a difficult pass by which the road debouched into the Maidan Valley. The rearguard was belated, and had to bivouack for the night at the pass—fortunately, without being noticed by the Zurmat body. As soon as the rearguard reached the camp on the morning of the 11th, Baker marched towards Arghandeh in the full hope of being able to carry out the programme and bring Mahomed Jan—the secular chief of the Ghazni gathering—to a decisive action. The rearguard, consisting of a portion of the 5th Punjab Infantry, was fired upon as soon as it left camp, and it was necessary to reinforce it by some of the 92nd Highlanders and two guns, the whole under Captain M'Allum, of the 92nd Highlanders. The firing was the work of the Zurmat men, who had arrived in Maidan that morning. They, however, feared to descend into the valley, and the rearguard, though much harassed for some miles and delayed, reached Arghandeh soon after nightfall. Here Native reports spoke of a defeat sustained by Mahomed Jan that morning in the Chardei Valley; but the hills about the pass which leads from Arghandeh into that valley were seen to be occupied by parties of the enemy, who, if the reports were true, would belong to the retreating Ghazni men. Baker immediately attacked with artillery and two companies of the 92nd Highlanders, under Major White, which composed his advanced guard; and the heights were carried with a rush and occupied for the night by pickets of the Highlanders. The General was, however, without news of Macpherson, and the messengers sent with information of his proceedings and position to Sir F. Roberts at Kabul returned, reporting the road closed. This seemed strange in view of the Native reports above mentioned; but at last a message was got through to Kabul, and Baker determined to feel his way into the Chardei Valley the next morning, the 12th, and get into communication with Macpherson. Camp was accordingly struck, and a strong rearguard, consisting of a company of the Highlanders, 350 of the 5th Punjab Infantry, two mountain guns, and a troop of the 5th Punjab Cavalry—the whole under Major H.M. Pratt, of the 5th Punjab Native Infantry—was told off to protect the long train of baggage, the animals of which were greatly knocked up from the laborious marches of

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the last three days. The distress of the transport animals, indeed, was such that Baker, who had early got into heliographic communication with Kabul and learnt something of the state of things there, formed the intention of parking them in a small fort about four miles from Arghandeh, and pushing on to Kabul with all but a small guard to be left for their defence. But the rearguard was so delayed by the persistent attempts of the enemy to head it and capture the baggage, that—most fortunately as it happened—this design was abandoned, and the General decided to push on for Kabul without delay, baggage and all. On arrival at Macpherson's camp at Deh-i-Mazung, he found instructions to return at once to Sherpur, where he arrived, to the great satisfaction of every one, at six p.m. The rearguard, which had been harassed to within a few miles of Kabul, arrived two hours later with the baggage intact, thanks to the steadiness of the men and the excellent arrangements made by the officer commanding. Thus a well-conceived plan, but unfortunately founded on very defective information of the strength of the combination against us, came to an unsatisfactory conclusion, particularly disappointing to General Baker, who had been able to perform to the letter all the conditions necessary to its success.

The events of the 13th, when the Takht-i-Shah was assaulted in reverse by a force under Baker and carried in grand style by the 92nd Highlanders and Guides, have already been related at considerable length. Sherpur rang with praises of all the troops engaged on this day. Besides the Highlanders and Guide Infantry, the Guide Cavalry was particularly lauded for the admirable charge it made under Lieutenant-Colonel G. Stewart, and the 5th Punjab Cavalry for several effective charges delivered under the eye of General Baker among the Siah Sang Hills. But, indeed, all the troops did well, and the day closed amid universal rejoicings, and in the belief that the mishap of the 11th had been well revenged, that a severe lesson had been read to the Sepoys and tribesmen under Mooshk-i-Alim and Mahomed Jan, and that things would speedily return to their former peaceful condition. No apprehension was felt at the continued dispersion of Macpherson's Brigade. A wing of the 5th Goorkhas bivouacked on the hardly-won top of the Takht-i-Shah; the 72nd Highlanders still held the picket hill which they had so stubbornly defended on the night of the 11th; and Macpherson remained at Deh-i-Mazung with instructions to defend the gorge at all hazards.

In anticipation of further offensive operations being desirable the next day, the 14th, to complete the discomfiture of the insurgents, instructions were issued late in the evening of the

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13th for a force to be held in readiness to move out, if necessary, at nine a.m., under General Baker. The defiant attitude assumed by the Afghans on the Koh-i-Asmai on the morning of the 14th showed that this precaution was wise. How gallantly the Koh-i-Asmai was stormed by the 72nd, 92nd, and Guides has already been told by telegram. It, however, deserves notice that this gallant feat of arms was performed by much fewer men than was supposed at the time—namely, by about 167 men of the two Highland regiments and 350 of the Guides. Among these 167 men there were 20 casualties, while the Guides had 41, of whom 12 were killed. It is a rare thing for such a feat of arms to be watched in safety by so many admiring comrades as followed its progress with their glasses from the walls of Sherpur. For the moment it seemed that such a striking success, following on that of the preceding day, must utterly dishearten the enemy, and that our position at Kabul was on the point of being completely re-established. But the elated spectators of the combat could not see the masses of men collecting on the mountain away to the right of Baker's attack, or that the fugitives from Koh-i-Asmai were stealing round under shelter of the Chardei villages. The enemy's impending counterstroke was, therefore, quite unexpected in Sherpur, and only half anticipated by Baker himself from his position with the guns at the foot of Koh-i-Asmai.

The troops upon the conical hill, which forms about the central point of the whole Koh-i-Asmai ridge, consisted, when the ridge was captured, of four guns of Swinley's mountain battery, about thirty-three men of the 72nd, about the same number or rather more of the Guides, and the guard proper of the mountain battery, consisting of one company of the 5th Punjab Infantry. A visit to this conical hill shows that it is extremely steep; and being pointed at the top, affords little ground to post troops for defence. The defenders, besides being assailed in front, were fired into from the rear by men who had crept up the lower spurs of the main Koh-i-Asmai hill. The gun mules, while being loaded up for the too-long-deferred retirement, must thus have been exposed to a double fire. The reinforcement sent up under Captain Hall had not a chance of coming into effective action. The hill was lost while they were still struggling up its higher slopes. Not the least interesting sight connected with this hill is the numerous little sepulchres of loose stones which the Afghans have built in which temporarily to place their dead. As many as fifteen were counted, each with its stark occupant. The bodies were probably those of men from a distance which could not be at once removed. Some of the sepulchres have already been emptied, and doubtless in time all will be, the

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feeling being strong with Afghans to bury their dead in the ancestral graveyards.

It was the reverse upon the conical hill and the proof it gave General Roberts of the numbers and confidence of the enemy that determined him to abandon any more offensive operations until reinforced from below, and to direct the concentration of all the troops in Sherpur. Orders were sent accordingly to General Macpherson. It was necessary first to withdraw the wing of the 5th Goorkhas and two mountain guns from the Takht-i-Shah on to the Bala Hissar hill—an operation of some delicacy, and which was conducted with much coolness and skill by Major Sim, of the Goorkhas. This was followed by the descent of the whole force from the Bala Hissar hill. General Macpherson has reported that this difficult retirement brought out the best qualities of our troops, and it is easy to believe it, the troops being not only threatened from behind by the enemy who had followed Major Sim from the Takht-i-Shah, but having to pass the Deh-i-Mazung gorge now, as well as the Koh-i-Asmai and village of Deh-Afghan, in possession of the enemy, and then to cross the open plain between Deh-Afghan and Sherpur under a musketry fire from the numerous orchards and walls.

General Roberts has the reputation of being a very lucky general, and certainly fortune did not desert him on this occasion, when Macpherson's Brigade was able to rejoin him without serious loss, under circumstances of considerable difficulty and risk.

It was from the top of the Bala Hissar this day that the admirable charge of Lieutenant Vousden, with a few men of the 5th Punjab Cavalry, was viewed, for which it is hoped he will get the Victoria Cross. The report that was made to the General is said to have run that he (Colonel Money) did not know what regiment it was that made the charge, nor could he at that distance distinguish whether the officer who led it was a native or a European; but that whoever it was he deserved the Victoria Cross, and each of the ten men who followed him the Order of Merit. The charge was made upon a body of about 500 Afghan infantry endeavouring to make their way from Koh-i-Asmai across the plain to the Siah Sang Hills; and the leader—Vousden—was discerned in the middle of the enemy, pursuing and cutting down first one and then another, until five Afghans had fallen to his single sword. It was only on subsequent inquiry that the regiment and officer were identified.

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Appendix IV

Kabul (*Times*, April 10, 1880).

KABUL, *March* 6, 1880.

The city of Kabul is well worth a visit. It has now quite recovered from the damage done to it by the Ghazis last December, which, indeed, was not very great. It was confined to stripping the shops lining certain portions of the various bazaars of their woodwork, doubtless as much from the want of fuel at that inclement season as from mischief or illwill. Some of the houses of Sirdars known to be favourable to us were wrecked, and petty pilfering from the meaner class of fruit and vegetable shops was freely indulged in; but as a rule the exactions of the insurgents were confined to the daily supply of bread. The hard cash realized from the city is believed, after careful official inquiry, to have amounted to the small sum of 30,000 rupees only. The aspect of the city for some days after the 23rd of December was certainly very forlorn and deserted; but as a rule only those buildings, whether in the city or in the Bala Hissar, which had been officially connected with the British occupation were systematically damaged. Thus the Kotwallee, which, from being the place of business of the chief city magistrate, had become the scene of General Hill's daily labours as military commandant of the town, showed many marks of wilful destruction, and the building in what is known as the Ameer's garden in the Bala Hissar, from which General Roberts' proclamation was read on the first arrival of the troops, was all but destroyed by fire.

It is difficult to convey to the untravelled Western mind an idea of what Kabul is like, though easy enough to any one who has wandered as far east as Cairo. It would not help the former class of readers to say it resembles Bagdad, which it does, subtracting the various Christian churches and Mohammedan tombs of Bagdad and the really handsome barracks and public buildings which the Turks have erected. In truth, all Asiatic cities have the strongest family resemblance, and have little to distinguish them from one another, unless the introduction of foreigners as permanent residents, or the free adoption of Western ideas by the native population, has revolutionized the native ideas of comfort and convenience. Kabul is as yet free from either of these

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elements of change and improvement, and remains to this day just what we may suppose it to have been in the days when Timour Shah first made it his capital. In its general aspect it is a mere conglomeration of mud walls and houses, most of the latter of the meanest class, but all constructed with a view to privacy and concealment, as is usual in Mohammedan countries. It is permeated by filthy and narrow lanes, which at this season are ankle-deep in mud and snowy slush, and are always the natural resting-place for such filth and refuse as the inhabitants, who are not very nice, find too offensive to retain within their own walls. Kabul is an unwalled town, but the want of walls is supplied to some extent by the style in which the outlying houses are generally built—namely, with blank outer walls enclosing open courtyards, round which the rooms occupied by the family find place. The ambition of the lower class is satisfied by a single story only, but the better classes always have a second story, and each house then becomes a regular fortress. A more undesirable town, chiefly for this reason, and from the narrowness and intricacy of its lanes, for troops to have to act in, it would be impossible to find. The roofs of the houses are all flat, and of mud, and generally made private by a parapet 3 ft. or 4 ft. high round the outer circumference. This gives a strange uniformity of appearance to the town when viewed from the hills above, and impresses the observer with the little effect which would be produced upon the place by artillery fire from however advantageous a position.

There are two exceptions to the generally tortuous character of the Kabul streets, and they are to be found in the part devoted to business. The first of these is the Shor Bazaar, a long straight street running nearly east and west, and dividing the city into two unequal parts. This bazaar is devoted to the sale of every description of article of luxury, from the silks and finery of the Zenana to the China teacups which are such an indispensable appendage to even the most modest Afghan household. The wares are exhibited, in the fashion common to the East, in a narrow verandah, elevated about 3 ft. above the level of the street, with perhaps a scarcely larger enclosed space behind, where the bulkier articles are stored. The owners of the shops sit cross-legged on the ground, with a pan of hot coals at this season to keep life in their fingers and toes ; and it is a peculiarity with them that they show no eagerness whatever to sell their wares, such as is generally observable in Eastern bazaars, where a supposed customer is sometimes almost torn in pieces by rival dealers ; but after quietly exhibiting any article demanded, and asking for it an obviously ridiculous price, they return it to its shelf without a word of remark or a hint of abatement, and are quite

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indifferent if the customer betakes himself straightway to the adjoining rival shop. Each of these shops is closed at the approach of evening by rude wooden shutters, and the occupant betakes himself, with anything peculiarly valuable and portable, to his private residence in one of the retired lanes of the city. The Shor Bazaar is roughly covered in with a mud roof, supported on wooden uprights, so constructed as to leave plenty of light and air, and yet to protect the crowded and narrow thoroughfare from rain or snow. The other large thoroughfare of Kabul is what is called the Char Chowk, or Bazaar of the Four Squares, from the four quadrangular spaces through which the main line of street runs. The short streets which connect these quadrangles are covered in like the Shor Bazaar, and it is here that all sorts of necessaries of life are to be found—the dealers in fruit, vegetables, bread and meat, and in the various skins and furs so largely used for the winter apparel of all classes of the Kabulees. Here, too, are to be found the shops of the saddlers—a very flourishing trade in a country where every one rides who can afford it—and the various artificers in wood, iron and brass, and the suppliers of every sort of household necessaries, from a basket of nails and old iron to the fantastic shoes worn by the highest Afghan ladies. The course of this long street is about parallel to the Shor Bazaar, and crosses the Kabul river by a rude bridge old enough to have seen the passage of Timour Shah's processions, and the haunt at present of innumerable beggars. This, by the way, is a class which infests every street and lane of Kabul and its environs; and the appeal for alms is incessant, and is renewed for every individual passer-by. The appearance of these unfortunate beggars is most pitiable; but I imagine they have reaped a less abundant harvest from the English occupation than any other class of the population—not that their appeals are wanting in pathos, or addressed to unpitying ears, but the copper coin of the country is inconvenient to carry, and the English in Kabul, following the custom in India, rarely carry the current coin of the realm in their pockets. This bazaar, like the Shor Bazaar, is incessantly crowded by buyers, and by horsemen and pedestrians of all classes; and it is no uncommon thing for the whole moving mass to be brought to a stand for some minutes by the passage of a long string of loaded mules or camels, which blocks up almost the entire roadway of the narrow street. The Char Chowk Bazaar, was the bazaar in which the body of Sir William MacNaghten was said to have been exposed and dishonoured in December, 1841, and it was therefore selected by General Pollock for destruction in the following year. The injury it then received has been only partially repaired, and in particular a channel of running water, with reservoirs at each of

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the four quadrangles, which was one of its original embellishments, has ceased to exist, and the reservoirs, which still remain, are dry and choked with rubbish.

Female figures are rare in the streets of Kabul, though ghost-like forms occasionally meet the eye, tramping on foot through the muddy lanes, and buying simple articles for household use at the stalls of the various vendors. The form and appearance of the *boorka*, or shroud-like sheet which envelops the Afghan woman when abroad, will be familiar to most readers. Of all female costumes it is surely the ugliest and least graceful that ever was invented; but the completeness of the disguise awakens a certain feeling of curiosity in the beholder to know what it conceals. I have little doubt that in 90 cases out of 100, where met with in the streets of Kabul, the *boorka* conceals something which it would give the beholder very little pleasure to see. It is not to be supposed that any Afghan lady of good position would set her delicate feet in the filthy mud of a Kabul street; and the few female figures which meet the eye are, I have no doubt, those of some household drudge, or housekeeper in humble life, catering for the wants of a mistress or hardworking husband. It is the fashion to fancy that the *boorka*, when worn abroad, always conceals some intrigue, and that in countries where it is used the morals of the female sex are of the loosest kind. It is very commonly forgotten what a dreadful penalty any indiscretion on the part of woman carries in strict Mohammedan countries, and, given the inclination, I greatly doubt if the danger incurred by indulging it does not generally turn the scale in favour of virtue. I do not forget how Kaye attributed the Afghan outbreak of 1841 in a great measure to the immoralities of the English officers. In those days several officers of the Kabul army of occupation had houses in the city of Kabul, and possessed facilities for intrigue which are certainly not shared by their successors of the present army, who live, without exception, in Sherpur. But I have questioned intelligent Afghans on this subject, and their answer has been not that the Afghans had to complain so much of intrigues against their honour, as that the English occupation of Afghanistan had an inconvenient effect upon the fair sex generally; for the women believed that while the army occupied their country English humanity would not allow the fearful penalty to be any longer exacted which the laws of Mohammed sanctioned.

Kabul possesses almost no public buildings or monuments of interest. The tomb of Timour Shah, which stands in a large open enclosure in almost the centre of the city, has, I believe, never been finished, is certainly now greatly out of repair, and never could have possessed any architectural beauty. The

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mosques are extremely mean, and, with the exception of Timour's tomb, the ugly uniformity of the flat mud roofs is unbroken by a single object like a tomb or a minaret, such as you would expect to see in a large Mohammedan capital. There is not even a handsome *serai*, and the best *serais* are so filthy, from the peculiar habits of the people, that they cannot be inspected without disgust. The beauties of Kabul must be sought outside the city, in the gardens and orchards with which the neighbourhood is studded, and in the views which can be obtained from the top of the Shahr-i-Darwaza or Asmai hills. From these hills the valley of Kabul, and still more that of Chardei, must look lovely when the rich crops they produce are on the ground, and when the orchards and gardens are decked in their summer foliage.

The manners of the Afghan Sirdars of Kabul, as seen in their own houses and in their intercourse with those English officers who show any desire to cultivate their acquaintance, are exceedingly pleasing and friendly. Sirdar Wali Mahomed Khan, for instance, who if he could only speak European languages would be an acceptable guest at the best tables in London or Paris, is a most agreeable companion, full of conversation, and with an immense fund of information and anecdote drawn from long experience of men and things. In a lower generation, Ahmed Ali Khan, a grandson of the ex-Amir Shere Ali, and son of that eldest and favourites on whose death in battle drove Shere Ali for some months almost mad with grief, is a youngster who, if he carries out his present wish to accompany Sir F. Roberts to England, may yet make his mark in London drawing-rooms. Among other visits, I lately paid one to Hussein Ali Khan, a Kizilbash gentleman of some distinction, who, after many years of faithful service rendered to Shere Ali, became at last Commander-in-Chief of the Afghan army. Hussein Ali Khan, I may remark *en passant*, was just the kind of man that Shere Ali liked to promote. He was not one of the Barakzai Sirdars of whose possible ambition and influence Shere Ali was so prudently apprehensive, but a man without tribal or family influence, and who looked to his patron alone for advancement and place. He was tutor to the young Abdullad Jan, Shere Ali's grandson, and accompanied his patron in that capacity to the Umballa meeting in 1869. When Ayub Khan obtained possession of Herat, shortly after Shere Ali's flight to Turkestan in 1878, Hussein Ali Khan was sent by him a prisoner to Kabul and remained in confinement by Yakoob's order until after the battle of Charasia, when his Kizilbash kinsmen released him. This by the way. His house is in the Kizilbash quarter of Kabul, and the approach to it gives a good idea of the necessity under which Afghan Sirdars live of making their houses their castles. Turning down a narrow and

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filthy lane, the road lay through a dark covered passage to the entrance door. Here the ex-Commander-in-Chief met me and my companion, and, ascending a deep staircase with an abrupt turn, making it highly defensible, he led us through an outer room into a small apartment furnished with chairs and a table. The latter, on our entrance, was covered with a cloth of gay pattern, which was immediately withdrawn, and exposed a perfect array of the beautiful fruits of Kabul—apples, pears, grapes, and quinces, interspersed with plates of confectionery. After a few minutes' conversation tea was brought in and served in cups of Russian ware. The tea used by the Kabul Sirdars is invariably green, imported by way of Bombay, the supply direct from China through Bokhara having been stopped for many years, for reasons which I have not been able to discover. It is drunk Persian fashion, weak and without milk, and freely sweetened with Russian loaf sugar. The taste for tea in this form is soon acquired. We were then most hospitably pressed to attack the beautiful fruits, and as our host was full of conversation, and was equally at home in the Persian and Afghan languages, we were able to enjoy a most interesting hour's talk. On our taking leave we were again conducted to the foot of the stairs by our host, who remained standing until we had mounted our horses. It is gratifying to think that under probable future arrangements there may yet be a prospect of honourable employment for men like Hussein Ali Khan, and happy will it be for the coming ruler of Kabul if he finds among his subjects many others like this worthy soldier and gentleman.

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Appendix V

General Roberts' March from Kabul to Kandahar (*Times*, September 1, 1880).

(By telegraph.) CAMP, KELAT-I-GHILZAI, *August* 23, 1880.

General Roberts reached Kelat-i-Ghilzai to-day and found all well there. The fort has not been attacked or annoyed. The garrison accompanies General Roberts to Kandahar. The march from Kabul to Kelat has been very rapid, considering the size and encumbrances of the force, and is creditable to the troops both British and Native. Supplies have been procured with some difficulty, but in sufficient quantity, thanks to the exertions of the political, supply and transport officers. Kandahar should be reached by the 29th or 30th inst. The country, so far, is tranquil, and the people profess themselves contented with Abdur Rahman's accession. The nights are cold, but the days are very warm. Heliographic communication with Kelat was opened on the 21st inst.

August 24.

The reason why the Logar route was selected for the march of General Roberts' army was, that the prospect of obtaining supplies by it was better. The country about Argandeh and Maidan had been greatly drained by the alternate demands of the British columns and the Afghan gatherings. The Logar route is, however, at least one march longer, and its southern end is closed by a rough mountain ridge very grievous to the laden baggage animals. This ridge was crossed partly by the Zamburra Pass, a steep ascent of 900 ft., and partly by the Wardak defile, a chasm in the mountain through which the Logar river enters the valley. After crossing this obstacle the army fell into the ordinary Kabul and Ghazni road. The force under General Roberts consists of 274 British officers, 2,562 British troops, and 7,157 Native troops—a total of 9,993 men. Of these 1,615 are cavalry, 318 being British cavalry. There are three mountain batteries of seven-pounders, but no wheeled guns. The transport consists of 8,307 animals of all sorts. The wants of the sick and wounded are provided for by 2,138 dooley bearers and 266 riding animals of all kinds. The Ordnance park carries 236 rounds per gun, and 100 rounds per rifle, all the rest being in the regimental charge. The small Engineer park is carried by eighty mules. The Commissariat carries thirty days' rum, tea, and sugar, and five days' flour for the Europeans, and the same proportion of the provisions issued to the natives. The most necessary daily wants of the army are 23,000 lb. of attah and 20,000 lb. of grain,

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the former for the men, the latter for the animals. This the country has so far been able to supply, so that the reserves have been kept intact. Luckily the autumn crop of Indian corn, being now well grown, has supplied the required amount of green forage. The above figures will give some idea of the difficulties which General Roberts has had to contend with; and when I add that the force has marched on the average nearly sixteen miles daily since the 9th inst., and that the eight marches from Ghazni to Kelat have averaged sixteen and three-quarter miles it may be understood that General Roberts is a commander of no common resolution and energy, and that the troops he commands are of the very best quality. The latter have, indeed, done admirably, both English and natives, and are full of eagerness to reach Kandahar and relieve their beleaguered comrades. The hardest lot is naturally that of the camp followers and transport animals, and it is not to be supposed that such marches have been made without grievous suffering to both; but the sacrifice was imperatively demanded by the honour of England and the safety of her sons. The whole army at Kabul rejoiced that fortune again afforded General Roberts the chance of crowning the military reputation he has already gained by the achievement of such an enterprise as the relief of Kandahar. Recent changes had placed him somewhat in the background, and nothing but his true soldierly instincts probably kept him at Kabul. Now he has his reward. I know no officer who is so entirely master of the art of acquiring the love and confidence of those he leads, whether English or native. To-day the army is enjoying a most grateful halt in a fine open plain between the famous fort of Kelat-i-Ghilzai and the Termuk River. The state of things with the Kandahar garrison admitted of this salutary repose, and it will give General Phayre time to bring his movements into combination with those of General Roberts. If Ayub Khan will only wait, General Phayre from the south should be able to cut off his retreat upon Herat, and with General Roberts advancing on his front, a telegram a few days hence may possibly tell of his utter discomfiture; but will he wait? In conclusion, I may say that General Roberts' advance has been much facilitated by the instructions sent forward from Kabul by the newly-proclaimed Ameer, and by the readiness with which they have been obeyed. The latter is a happy omen for his future stability if only this dangerous rival, Ayub Khan, can be disposed of. The weather gets sensibly hotter as we approach Kandahar. For one boon this army is deeply grateful. The streams which nature or art leads out of the bowels of the stony hills and plains of Afghanistan afford a plentiful supply of the coldest and purest water.

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Appendix VI

The Battle of Kandahar, September 1, 1880 (*Times*, October 15, 1880).

KANDAHAR, *September* 4, 1880.

On the evening of the 1st of September I was able to send you a brief account of the result of the action fought that day by Sir F. Roberts with the army of Ayub Khan, and on the 2nd I sent a telegram entering somewhat more into detail. Upon the dry bones of these two telegrams I will now endeavour to build a narrative of what occurred, still brief and, perhaps, imperfect, but which may assist the future historian if he condescends to consult it.

After arriving in nineteen marches at Robat, at the entrance of the Kandahar Valley, and only seventeen miles from Kandahar, General Roberts justly thought it advisable to give his troops one day's repose, and to divide the remaining distance into two short marches, thereby husbanding their strength for the final effort which it was by this time certain they would be called on to make on arrival at Kandahar. The known situation of affairs at Kandahar fully justified this relaxation of the tension which every one attached to the force had lived under since going into camp at Beni Hissar on the 8th of August. It was, therefore, on the morning of the 31st that the troops first sighted the walls of Kandahar, and piled arms for a few hours' rest at the Shikarpore gate of the city. It was a scorching hot day, and the extreme dryness of the season and the cutting off by Ayub's order of the grateful supply of water, which ordinarily reaches the city and its environs from the Argandab, had withered the trees and gardens, which would otherwise have afforded some relief from the powerful rays of an August sun. In the meantime, the General, who had for the last few days been seriously ill from fatigue, anxiety and exposure, obtained from General Primrose and Colonel St. John the best and latest information they could give of the position and designs of Ayub. The last-named, I may here observe, is much under the influence of two or three of his leading followers. One of these is generally designated the Lu'inab, a corruption of the Pushtoo word *lowé*, great, and *naib*, deputy. He is, I believe, the same person who was reported, under the name of Khushdil Khan, as deputed by Yakub to receive Cavagnari's

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mission at the Shutargardan in July, 1879. Another is General Hafizoolah Khan, a trusted officer of Shere Ali's, and Deputy Commander-in-Chief of his army. Ayub himself is young, and certainly of no particular talent, and has been wise to trust himself to the advice of these two very astute men.

General Roberts fixed his own head-quarters in a large house at the south side of the cantonments, and in the course of the afternoon the different brigades took up their camps near him. Without loss of time the whole of the cavalry were sent forward under Brigadier-General Hugh Gough, to reconnoitre the enemy's position, Colonel Chapman, the Chief of the Staff, an officer of scientific attainments long attached to Sir Donald Stewart in the same capacity, and thoroughly acquainted with the ground, accompanying. The movements of the cavalry were very bold, and drew a heavy fire of guns and rifles from the enemy, whose position was thus accurately ascertained. At the risk of repeating what has already been told by telegram, I may say that it was behind a ridge of rough knife-backed hills, which runs in a north-easterly direction from near the left bank of the Argandab, and through which two passes lead from Kandahar. The first and nearest to Kandahar of these is the Babawali Pass, a very easy one, but defended by three guns, one at least of which was one of our own horse artillery guns captured at Maiwand. The second pass is known by the name of the Morcha Pass, and is three miles north-east of Babawali. It is impracticable for guns, but accessible to both cavalry and infantry. The main camp of the enemy lay between these two passes, but their whole position extended for fully two miles, right down from the village of Mazra to within one or one-and-a-half miles of the Argandab, all favourable points along the entire distance being occupied by guns, almost all rifled at the Kabul Arsenal, of which there were probably thirty-six or more in position. The ridge approaches the cantonment sufficiently near for the fire of the guns to reach the camp, and several shells fell into camp in the course of the afternoon and evening, but without, I believe, doing any damage. In the right rear of the enemy's line is a detached hill, also fortified and defended by guns, giving great strength to the right of their position, which, from their resolution to abide the attack of the British force, they doubtless considered impregnable after their recent successes.

The cavalry reconnaissance was probably understood by the enemy as a serious attempt to turn their right, and therefore, when, the desired information having been obtained, they saw the brigade about to withdraw, they came down from their various positions about Pir-Paimal, as the peak nearest the Argandab in the ridge is named, and attacked with loud shouts

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and a hot fire of musketry. But this had been foreseen, and the 15th Sikhs, from the 3rd Brigade, were in readiness to aid the retirement. An attempt made to interpose between the cavalry and the camp was foiled, and the cavalry withdrew to their camp south of the city without loss, while the 3rd Brigade took up an advanced position for the night in line of the Khakrez and Picquet hills and Herat road. The firing ceased as night drew on, and the troops rested in quiet, the enemy, however, strongly occupying the village of Gundigan, on our left front.

The orders for the attack next morning, issued on the information obtained by the reconnaissance of the afternoon, were as follow :—

" The troops to be formed up as under at 8 a.m.:—

" 1st Brigade behind Picquet hill, 2nd Brigade behind Khakrez hill, 3rd Brigade in front of its own camp ; Cavalry Brigade, together with E Battery, R.H.A., two companies of British, and four of Native Infantry, to assemble in rear of Gundigan at 9 a.m.

" C-2 R.A., 5-11 R.A. (heavy battery), four companies British, and two regiments Native Infantry, all to be detailed from the Kandahar garrison, together with the Bombay Cavalry Brigade, to assemble at the old cavalry lines, north-east of the cantonments, by 8 a.m., to threaten the Babawali Pass and watch the Morcha Pass. The heavy battery to open fire on the former pass at 9 a.m.

" The second reserve of infantry ammunition to take post near the house occupied as head-quarters."

These very distinct orders explain of themselves the General's plan for the coming fight, which was to make his real attack upon the enemy's right with his three Kabul brigades, while threatening an attack upon the Babawali Pass in front, and covering Kandahar with the Bombay troops. The possession of Gundigan in strength by the enemy, a fact not known when the plan of battle was arranged, made it necessary for the Cavalry Brigade to take position farther to the left, on the Herat road. Head-quarters were fixed for the present on Khakrez hill, from which an excellent view could be obtained of the first operations. The movement of the troops into their assigned places took place, of course, in full view of the Afghans, and did not pass without some shots from the Afghan guns.

Soon after nine the leading regiments of the 1st Brigade—the 92nd Highlanders and 2nd Goorkhas—advanced from the shelter of Picquet-hill to the attack of the village of Gundi-Mulla-Sahib-Dad, the Highlanders on the right, the Goorkhas on the left, supported by the 23rd Pioneers and 24th Native Infantry. While the advance was in progress, the village was shelled by

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the screw guns 6-8 R.A., from the front of Khakrez-hill, and by C-2 R.A., from near Chihil-Dukhteran, with good effect; and a body of horsemen, who were sheltered from sight by the village, soon found it advisable to retire at full speed. The advance was steady and brisk beyond all praise, and though the enemy fired well from the shelter of the walls and houses, they were quickly forced out of the village. The Goorkhas had a slight lead in this attack, owing to the ground in front of them being more open. I believe Lieutenant-Colonel Battye, commanding the regiment, was the first man into the village, but the Highlanders, who were directed on the right of the village, were only a few seconds behind him. Here a strange incident occurred. Lieutenant Menzies, of the Highlanders, being wounded, was carried into a hut to await the arrival of the surgeon. While lying there, attended by one or two of his men, a Ghazi jumped up from a dark corner of the hut, and before he could be dispatched, inflicted two more wounds upon Menzies, fortunately neither of them very severe. The enemy here fought stoutly, and a party of them shut themselves in a house so resolutely that it was necessary to bring up a gun before they could be dislodged. This was a brilliant beginning to the battle, and cleared the ground for the further advances of the troops upon the decisive point—namely, Pir-Paimal shoulder and village.

The Highlanders and Goorkhas, except a detachment of the latter left in the village to protect the wounded, were re-formed, and the 2nd Brigade, moving out from Khakrez hill, forced the enemy to abandon Gundigan, and aligned itself with the 1st Brigade. The 72nd and the 2nd Sikhs were the leading regiments of this brigade, the 5th Goorkhas and 3rd Sikhs being in second line. The troops now found themselves working among the canals, which form a peculiar feature in the field of battle. These were reported to be, though dry, extremely deep, and with carefully scarped banks prepared for defence; but rumour had, in this respect, fortunately gone ahead of fact, and they caused little delay or embarrassment to the troops as they pushed on to the shoulder of Pir-Paimal. The enemy held all the ground up to the shoulder, and every bank and garden was lined with their marksmen; but the troops would take no denial, and carried every obstacle with a rush right up to the village of Pir-Paimal, well round the shoulder, where they were, of course, lost to sight from Khakrez hill. At Pir-Paimal village it was intended that a halt should be made, with the threefold object of reconnoitring the ground in advance, resting the men, and filling up their ammunition. It was also intended to move up the 3rd Brigade, which still remained in its original position, before the advance was resumed. When, therefore, the leading

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brigades passed round the shoulder of Paimal, Sir F. Roberts took a leisurely survey of the field of battle before, as he supposed, carrying his turning movement to its legitimate close. The heavy battery had been firing on the Babawali Pass since 9 a.m., but the three Afghan guns on the ridge, or *kotal*, as these ascents are called in Afghanistan, still gave back nearly shot for shot, though the range, about one mile and a half, was favourable, and the practice apparently excellent. Large numbers of the enemy, both cavalry and infantry, had early in the morning descended the pass and occupied some low hills to the right front of the position of the heavy battery and of the supporting infantry and cavalry, which were under Brigadier-General Burrows. It was possible that an attempt might be in Ayub's contemplation to give annoyance to the rear of the very extended English position. Therefore, before moving up his reserve brigade to the support of the 1st and 2nd, Sir F. Roberts sent to General Burrows to ask if, after the success the troops had now achieved, he was prepared to hold his own unsupported, and on being answered in the affirmative, orders were given to Brigadier-General Macgregor to advance his brigade towards Pir-Paimal. General Roberts himself preceded it to Paimal, and there found that his leading brigades had pushed on without halt, and were then at least one mile ahead. A message from the front explained that after the village of Paimal had been taken, the enemy were still so active and menacing, and kept up such a heavy fire upon the troops, that General Macpherson had obtained General Ross's permission to continue the advance without pause—General Baker and the 2nd Brigade conforming—and to drive the enemy out of the enclosed gardens with which the ground beyond Paimal is covered. The same order of attack was preserved, the 92nd Highlanders and Goorkhas leading on the right close under the hill, while the 2nd Brigade, which had the outside of the curve to follow, was a little behind on the left. The enemy continued to oppose these two brigades with great resolution, absolutely refusing to stir for mere fire, and being only expelled from the difficult ground over which the fight led them by repeated rushes of our troops. When the latter would thus get within fifty yards of them they gave way and stalked off sullenly to the rear, scattering as they went to avoid the effect of the breech-loaders, and never failing to snatch up the rifle of any wounded or slain comrade. The enemy's demeanour showed that their respect for British troops had been diminished by their recent successes, and it was only later in the day that they seemed to recognize their inability to contend with our soldiers.

About half a mile beyond the village of Paimal the advanced companies of the 92nd Highlanders sighted a small camp of the

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enemy, and led and cheered on by an officer repeatedly distinguished in this campaign—Major G. S. White, who had rejoined the regiment from his appointment as Military Secretary to the Viceroy by an incredibly fast journey from Simla, only overtaking the regiment the very day it left Kabul, they made the final effort which was required to give them possession of the camp and the two guns which still defended it, one having been already removed to a short distance. With this success, in which the 23rd Pioneers of the same brigade participated, the active resistance of the enemy ceased, and what followed was merely a pursuit, in which at every step abandoned guns fell into the hands of the pursuing troops. The 2nd Brigade here took the lead, and were first to reach the main camp of the enemy, which covered a large space of ground at the hither side of the village of Mazra, with a line of guns which were left in position. Here the infantry pursuit was necessarily brought to a close from the utter exhaustion of the troops. This was at half-past twelve or one o'clock.

After passing the village of Pir-Paimal, General Baker had directed a detachment of the 3rd Sikhs, under Lieutenant-Colonel Money, of Shutargardan repute, to take possession of the detached hill in rear of the enemy's right. Finding himself commanded from a further hill, Colonel Money pushed on by the northern side of this hill and made himself master of four guns, obtaining a full view below him of the enemy's camp, then full of men, and with a line of cavalry drawn up in rear. Before the Mountain Battery (Douglas') attached to this brigade could be brought up, the advance of the troops from the other side of the hill put all these men into motion, and in the absence of cavalry, their retreat could not be interfered with.

It has occurred before in the course of this campaign that the cavalry, when massed in brigade, have lost opportunities of rendering most efficient service, which they would have availed themselves of if attached by regiments to the infantry brigades. On this occasion there can, I think, be no doubt that a grand opportunity was lost, and that the concentrated action of Hugh Gough's cavalry, though not altogether thrown away, was far less effective than if the regiments composing it had been more dispersed, and more in touch with the infantry. General Roberts, when he found how complete the success of the infantry had been, did all that he could to bring cavalry into action, but it was too late. He sent for the Bombay Cavalry Brigade, which had formed part of General Burrows' command opposite the Babawali Pass, and launched them in pursuit through the village of Mazra up the Argandab Valley; but the opportune moment had passed, and the result was, perhaps inevitably, disappointing.

The heartrending sight of Lieutenant Maclaine's lifeless body

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lying by the roadside met the troops as they entered Ayub's camp. The story goes that when the order for retreat was given, the guard over the miserable tent allotted to the unfortunate officer called upon him to come out, and then, with shocking barbarity, deliberately cut his throat. Some Sepoy prisoners belonging to one of the regiments engaged at Maiwand declared that they saw the horrible deed committed, and, passing a pole through a cloth swathed round the body, carried the poor fellow to the road hard by, by which the troops were advancing. His own clothes had probably been appropriated by his captors, as he was meanly dressed in the underclothing of a British gunner. General Roberts, on becoming aware of what had occurred, sent an officer to the tent pointed out as having been that occupied by Maclaine. It had been thrown down, but underneath were found some affecting trifles, the bread left from his last meal, his pipe, and a sheet of paper containing a sort of pencil diary going down to August 15, when his pencil apparently failed. For this inhuman murder Ayub Khan must, in the absence of proof to the contrary, be considered answerable, and it may be hoped that it will prevent any sort of terms being ever accorded him by the British Government, whatever may happen in the future.

Ayub's own tent—a handsome single-poled one—was one of the most prominent objects in the camp, but all the property it contained had been previously removed. The camp covered a very large extent of ground, and showed that the occupants had not wanted for supplies, both for man and beast.

After a short rest, Sir F. Roberts—who had been seriously unwell for some days before, and whose high spirit and courage only had enabled him to bear up under the excessive fatigue and heat of the day—passed to the different assembled regiments in succession, beginning with the 92nd Highlanders, and thanked and praised them for the great success they had achieved. The cheers with which he was received by each regiment, British and Native, in succession, will never be forgotten by those who heard them, and show the respect and confidence in which he is held. The resolution he showed in accomplishing the weary march from Kabul to Kandahar in twenty days, with an army so large and so completely equipped, was fitly crowned by a victory so complete as to leave scarcely anything to be desired, and which has completely effaced, so far as a victory can, the disasters which preceded it. His feelings on the evening of the 1st of September must, indeed, have been truly enviable, and his good fortune gratifies every one.

The regiments General Roberts commanded, and whose best exertions he so skilfully called forth, were one and all, British and Native, worthy of him and of the occasion. It is most

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gratifying, and, I may add, unusual, to hear the laudations which each bestows on the other. Not one single word of depreciation have I heard. On the contrary, the British regiments are unstinted in their praise of the Native, and the Native of the British. I will not break the harmony of praise by naming a single regiment; yet I will not deny that there is one regiment the naming of which as pre-eminent, whether in the march or in the battle, would, I believe, be received without a single dissentient voice.

Macpherson's brigade bivouacked for the night at the captured camp, the rest of the troops returning to their camps by the Babawali Pass. The greatest enthusiasm and joy prevailed, and every one in General Roberts' camp went to sleep that night with the satisfactory feelings of men who have made a great effort and obtained the object for which they strove. The feelings of the Kandahar garrison will not have been precisely identical, yet they, too, must have rested under a feeling of intense relief.

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Appendix VII

The Transvaal (*Times*, July 12, 1881).

CAMP, NEWCASTLE, *June* 14, 1881.

I propose in this letter to give a short *résumé* of the history of the Transvaal from the time of the annexation to the outbreak of the rebellion last December. The various events which occurred leading up to the outbreak have not hitherto, so far as I am aware, been put into a connected form.

I believe that it is now generally admitted that Sir T. Shepstone took a step not justified by Lord Carnarvon's published instructions when he issued his proclamation declaring the territory "heretofore known as the Transvaal Republic to be, and to be taken to be, British territory." His commission was confessedly one of inquiry into the "origin, nature, and circumstances" of certain "grievous disturbances" which had "broken out in the territories adjacent to our colonies in South Africa"; and it was only, "if the emergency should seem to be such as to render it necessary, in order to secure the safety of the said colonies, that any portion of the said territory should provisionally, and pending the announcement of Her Majesty's pleasure, be administered in her name," that Shepstone was authorized to declare such territory henceforth under British rule. The further condition was imposed upon Shepstone that the "inhabitants, or a sufficient number of them, or the Legislature, should desire to become subjects." It certainly appears, therefore, as if Shepstone took upon himself to do an act in excess of the terms of his commission, and it is natural to ask how his conduct can be explained.

It would perhaps, not be unprecedented if Shepstone held some private instructions in addition to those with which he was publicly furnished. Many think that he was, and that Lord Carnarvon was led to give him such instructions by what may be almost called his "craze" for South African confederation, or, possibly, by the fear that England's action might be forestalled by some other European power. It is preferable, however, to suppose that Shepstone—a devoted and able public servant in the line in which he had been originally trained—was either misled by the advice and opinions of those about him, or saw so plainly the bent of the Colonial Secretary's hopes and

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wishes, that he feared the imputation of failure if he did not realize them. No doubt, at Pretoria, Shepstone would fall among a very dangerous set of advisers. Many of them would be originally not very reputable refugees from other South African colonies, who had acquired interests in the Transvaal which would be greatly secured and advanced if the country became British. A few would doubtless be Dutchmen, indignant at the state into which the country had drifted under the Burgers' Government, and who desired the peace and security which the British flag would give them. Lastly, there would be men like the Lydenburg gold diggers, who, weak in numbers, lived on the outskirts of the country, liable to attack from the natives, and naturally desirous to prosecute their industry under the British flag, rather than under that of a tottering Dutch Republic.

Advisers such as these would be sure to paint matters to Shepstone in their darkest colours. They would insist upon the hopeless imbecility of the Boer Government, the utter emptiness of the Treasury, and the martial degeneracy of the Boers presumed from their undoubted misbehaviour in the contest with Secocoeni. They would represent the evident unpopularity of Burgers as a desire on the part of the people for British rule. Subsequent experience and a better acquaintance with the facts of the situation have shown how untrustworthy all these advisers were; but at the time their arguments, and, perhaps, Shepstone's natural ambition to play a grand game, prevailed. It seems certain that, notwithstanding some formal protests, which served as a salve to wounded dignity, the general feeling of the Boers was, for the moment, at least, one of indifference, if not of satisfaction. At any rate, the annexation relieved them of an unpopular President, of an irritating war tax, and of a very burdensome liability to military service. Certainly, their quiet acquiescence may have arisen from the fact that the full magnitude of the events which had taken place at Pretoria in April, 1877, was only gradually realized by the widely-scattered and slow-thinking Boers. The Boer leaders now go even further than this, and assert in their proclamations that the resignation and apparent acquiescence of their countrymen was the result of their own orders, and of their fixed belief that when their appeal reached England the annexation would be immediately undone.

But, however this may be the annexation was now an accomplished fact. It remained for prudent statesmanship to make it a success. A race very unlike our own in ideas, habits, language, and traditions had to be conciliated; an improved system of government to be introduced; taxation and the finance of the province to be put upon a proper basis. English officials in India have again and again encountered successfully the same

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difficulties which here presented themselves. The circumstances under which Lord Dalhousie annexed the Punjab were not unlike those under which Sir T. Shepstone annexed the Transvaal. It is matter of history how, under the firm, yet sympathetic rule of the two Lawrences, the Sikhs early became the most contented and loyal subjects we have in India.

Opinions will probably differ to all time as to the causes which prevented the Transvaal from gradually settling down in contentment under English rule. Many will be satisfied with the "designing agitation," and "disappointed adventurer" theory. Others, who look deeper, will probably find that several causes were at work. I believe one of the most active to have been that our countrymen, from the first, despised the Boers for the want of courage which, from whatever cause, they undoubtedly displayed in the Secocoeni war of 1876, and also because they were so very different to themselves. This feeling of contempt led them to assume the airs of conquerors, and of a superior race. Much has been related recently of the boastful airs and talk of the younger Boers since the war. We must know our countrymen very little not to be sure that this is only a reproduction of the tone of the jubilant English settlers when English rule was first proclaimed in the Transvaal. The feeling of irritation thus excited was next fanned by the undisguised sneers of the relatives and countrymen of the Transvaal Boers in the Cape Colony and Free State, where the annexation was viewed with great disapprobation, The Boers were taunted by certain Dutch organs of the Press in those colonies, and privately, with their want of spirit in allowing their independence to be taken away without a fight. These causes were in actual operation during the months the Boers were waiting for the result of their first deputation, composed of Messrs. Krüger and Jorlssen to England. By the time that the delegates returned with the report that they had not been allowed even to discuss with Lord Carnarvon the question of annexation, other causes of irritation had arisen.

It had been distinctly promised to the Boers in the Act of Annexation that the Transvaal should remain a separate Government, "with its own laws and legislation." This was understood by them to mean that their own Volksraad or popular assembly would be continued to them. The Boers are, it need hardly be said, fanatics on the subject of representative government, the principle of which they carry into even the smallest matters. If it is only to build a church or found a school, they have, first, the public meeting, at which all details are discussed with the prolixity of a people who have little to do, and who feel themselves wronged if every one is not allowed the opportunity of entering his individual opinion. The public meeting nomi-

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nates the committee, and the report of the committee is again scanned and scrutinized with an earnestness which shows how dear it is to the Boer mind to know exactly how and where the money goes. If this natural peculiarity is considered, it need create no surprise that when month after month elapsed, and no Volksraad or other representative body was convened, the people began to feel what the loss of their independence really meant, and how absolutely debarred they were from any share in the management of their own affairs. Some think that, instead of waiting for the day when it should please the Colonial Office to send out a brand new constitution for the Transvaal, Shepstone should have put himself at the head of the old Volksraad, and through it carried on the government of the country. But he was aware of the previous strange and ignorant vagaries of this body, which had been known to pass a measure one day, and from sheer want of purpose to revoke it the next; and he contented himself with proposing for the approval of the Colonial Office a not illiberal form of constitution. I understand him to have recommended that the possible freaks of the representative body should be controlled by an Upper Chamber, which was to consist, I think, of Government nominees. It is a serious indictment against the Colonial Office as an engine of Government, that, in the face of Shepstone's solemn promise of legislative autonomy, no notice was taken of this recommendation. The so-called constitution of which Sir Garnet Wolseley was the bearer belongs to a later period.

Other causes besides the above doubtless combined to swell the rising discontent. The name of Natal has always stunk in the Boer nostril, because it reminded the people of one of their deepest grievances against the English. It displeased the Boers, therefore, to observe, or fancy they observed, an inclination in Shepstone to introduce a strong Natal element into the new Administration; and though they had never cared much about the Delagoa Bay railway project in President Burger's time, they chose to think that that ill-considered project, which had really died from inanition, was killed by Shepstone out of regard for the interests of Natal. Again, there were plenty of intelligent observers among the Boers to note that, in spite of the lectures which English high officials had so often read the Republic on its treatment of natives and its system of apprenticeship, which was denounced as slavery in disguise, the English, after all, practised much the same thing. It did actually happen about this time that some hundreds of destitute natives from the northern border were publicly "imbocked" at Pretoria and Potchefstroom. No doubt the English officials took good care that this "imbocking" was done in a proper and legitimate

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manner, but this did not prevent the Boers from remarking on English inconsistency, and attributing previous interference to a desire to embarrass the Republic and pave the way for annexation. Lastly, Dr. Jorlssen, who had retained his office as Attorney-General at the annexation, was declared to be inefficient, and was replaced temporarily by an immigrant attorney of no mark from Kimberley, thus, unfortunately, throwing a most able and dangerous man into the ranks of the Opposition.

The Government, however, remained unaccountably supine, either not observing or disregarding the growth of discontent. I would speak with all respect of Sir T. Shepstone, yet it would almost seem as if his energies had been exhausted by the one great effort of annexation. The construction of a new fabric of government did not occupy his attention so much as the more congenial task—in which his skill is undoubted—of dealing with the various external native tribes, notably with the Zulus, where there was a boundary question of great importance to be settled. Shepstone, however, was probably right not to show any haste or fussiness in improving the machinery of government. Caution and abstention from all irritating legislation and taxation were clearly desirable, till the temper of the country had been ascertained, and the people had had time to settle down to the new order of things.

It has never, I think, been clearly explained what brought Sir T. Shepstone's reign as Administrator to a close. Perhaps it was observed by the Colonial Secretary that the Transvaal was not only discontented, but not paying its own way, and he may have thought that the time had come when the Administrator who could not make his province self-supporting should make way for a man who understood better this, in Colonial Office estimation, first duty of a governor. The next Administration, at any rate, was not chargeable with the sin of indifference to finance, and I attribute—as will be seen hereafter—much of the subsequent trouble to the inexorable way in which the Colonial Office required Shepstone's successor to justify his appointment by a flourishing revenue return. Whatever the reason, Shepstone was summoned to England towards the end of 1878, and subsequently returned to South Africa a private individual. It is difficult to think that he can have left any enemies behind him in the Transvaal, or that he was personally unpopular with the Boers. Joubert told a high Cape official a year ago that if the country were only given back to them, the Boers would be quite content to accept Shepstone as President!

Shepstone was succeeded by Sir Owen Lanyon, then Administrator of Griqualand West. Successful as he had been in Griqualand West, it is nevertheless an unfortunate fact that he never

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" hit it off " with the Boers, with whom he soon became extremely unpopular. His was the odious task of restoring the solvency of a province where the tax-gatherer is a peculiarly detestable character, and he discharged it — financially — with singular success. The Treasury receipts in 1878 were only £77,000. In 1879, the first year of Lanyon's administration, they were £93,000 ; in 1880 they rose to £174,000 ; and in 1881 they were estimated to be £172,000 against an expenditure of £164,000, thus showing a handsome surplus. But—and this explains much—nearly £31,000 of arrear taxes were collected in 1880, and nearly £18,000 were budgeted for in 1881. It is easy to conceive the irritation which the collection of such an amount of arrears at the bidding of what the Boers considered an interloping Government, must have produced among these rough farmers. It was to avoid taxation that many of them came originally to the Transvaal ; and even when voted by their own Volksraad they had never paid taxes cheerfully. It is generally admitted now that it would have been far more politic if Sir Bartle Frere had been instructed by the Colonial Office to cause all arrears of taxes contracted before the annexation to be summarily wiped out. This might have been done reasonably enough on the ground that the arrears were the result of previous bad government, and that the new Government declined to incur unpopularity by wringing them, years after, from an unwilling people. What was impolitic in principle, and for which it is not Sir Owen Lanyon but much higher officials who are to be blamed, was, if, as I believe, my information is correct, made worse by the way in which it was carried out. The revenue accounts in the time of the Republic were imperfectly kept, and when the books passed into the hands of the English officials it was often doubtful how each taxpayer's account stood, and what amount of arrears, if any, was due from him. The practice, therefore, frequently was for the tax-collector to claim what seemed to be the amount due, and to throw the burden of proof that the claim was excessive upon the taxpayer. This may possibly explain what certainly seems strange in the Bezuidenhoot case, which was the immediate cause of the war. Bezuidenhoot was apparently called upon to pay certain arrears of taxes alleged to be £27 5*s*., and offered to pay £14, which was the sum he was finally adjudged to pay, exclusive of costs, after legal process.

This, at least, is the generally received version of the story, and, presuming its correctness, is a fair illustration of what has been said above of the mischief caused by raking up the old arrears of taxes.

Almost simultaneously with Sir Owen Lanyon assuming office, and therefore before some of the causes of discontent enumerated

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above came into operation, the second mass meeting held by the Boers since annexation took place (March and April 1879). The object of the meeting was to receive and consider the answer brought by Krüger and Joubert, the two delegates who composed the second deputation to England. At this meeting some 5,000 or 6,000 Boers assembled. An English gentleman who happened to be in the neighbourhood at the time, and who attended it, thus relates what passed :—

" I was struck by the universal feeling of dislike to the ruling Government displayed by all. The language of one old Boer was as follows : We were promised our own parliament ; it is not given. We were promised that contracts should be respected ; how have they treated the Volunteers who took up the defence of the frontier after the Secocoeni defeat in 1876, and who were promised farms when the war was over ? Why is the railway shelved in the interests of Natal ?" The speaker described the fights undergone, the loss of relatives, etc., in seeking the independence " sold from us by traitors." He told me that he and the older men would still restrain the younger and more impetuous, but that their influence would not last always unless our actions assisted it. The leaders of the meeting, with few exceptions, counselled peaceful measures, but a strong party clamoured for immediate recourse to arms, for which the time (it was during the Zulu war) was peculiarly favourable.

The decision of this meeting was to seek in the first instance an interview with Sir Owen Lanyon. The meeting took place, but the result was rather to make matters worse than better. Sir Owen was not, of course, able to hold out the smallest hope that the annexation would be annulled, and he gave this answer in a manner which could hardly have been gracious and conciliatory without raising false hopes. When the deputation returned to the meeting with Sir Owen's answer, many of the Boers were for an immediate rising and an attack upon Pretoria, which for a few days was seriously apprehended. But again peaceful counsels prevailed, and it was decided to await the arrival of Sir Bartle Frere, who was then fast approaching the capital. Full details of the meeting with Sir Bartle Frere were published in the official *Transvaal Gazette* of the day. At first he was under the belief, common to most of the Transvaal officials, that the Boer agitation was by no means general or spontaneous, and thought to allay it by argument, and the offer of a constitution on the model of that of the Cape. But the Boer demand was absolute—namely, that the country should be given back, neither more nor less ; and they would hear of no compromise. Finally Sir Bartle consented to forward a memorial to this effect to Lord Carnarvon, and to support it with a letter stating

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that in his opinion it "demanded the most serious attention of Her Majesty's Government."

Then for some time followed the usual temporary lull, while the Boers permitted themselves to hope that at last they had obtained a powerful advocate, and that the annexation would be annulled. Sir Garnet Wolseley afterwards complained, not without reason, that his own task was made harder by Sir Bartle's ambiguous language. But for the time there is no doubt that it had the effect of making the feelings of the Boers less bitter to the Government.

Then came Sir Bartle's removal from the High Commissionership of Natal and the Transvaal, and the appointment of Sir Garnet Wolseley. Sir Garnet's advent soon broke up the delusive calm. He came out armed with instructions to make a formal announcement to the Boers that "Her Majesty's sovereignty must be retained"; and, thinking that harm had been done by the false hopes in which the Boers had been encouraged, he made this announcement in the strongest and most decisive language possible. Such a rude shock to the Boer hopes, coming, as it did, at a time when the Administration was highly unpopular, and when the pinch of a strict collection of taxes and arrears of taxes was beginning to be felt, produced an effect which Sir Garnet soon perceived, and which he reported to Sir M. Hicks-Beach in his recently published despatch of October 29, 1879. He said:—

"I am compelled to recognize the continuance of grave discontent. I am informed on all sides that it is the intention of the Boers to fight for independence. . . . There is no doubt, I think, that the people are incited to discontent and rebellion by ambitious agitators, but I am compelled also to allow that the timid and wavering, who are awed into taking side against us, are comparatively a small party, and that the main body of the Dutch population are disaffected to our rule."

The result has shown that Sir Garnet judged the situation correctly.

It is not surprising that the mass meeting of the Boers which assembled soon after Sir Garnet Wolseley's announcement came together with feelings of the most hostile kind to the Government. At this meeting (December, 1879) the flag of the South African Republic (invented by President Burgers) was openly displayed, and resolutions passed in clear defiance of English authority. Mr. W. Pretorius, an ex-President of the Republic, presided, and a copy of the resolutions was forwarded, under his signature, to Sir Garnet Wolseley, with a request that it might be communicated to the English Government. Sir Garnet's reply was to arrest Pretorius, and Bok, the Secretary, on a charge of high treason.

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Then was published the Constitution which, after three years of incubation, the Colonial Office had at last produced—the Constitution which was to reconcile the Boers to the loss of independence and of representative government! Two bodies were formed, an Executive Council and a Legislative Assembly. The former consisted, besides the Governor, if present in the province, of the Administrator and four leading Government officials, with three non-official members to be nominated by the Governor. The Legislative Assembly consisted of the first-named body, *plus* the Chief Justice and six nominee members. The nominee members, both of the Executive Council and Legislative Assembly, were all removable at the Governor's pleasure. Power was reserved to the Governor to act without consulting or in opposition to the Council, if he judged it expedient; and questions affecting the revenue could only be proposed in the Legislative Assembly with the Governor's permission. Any legislation the Council might pass could always be disallowed or repealed by the Queen's authority. This Constitution was received with disdain and indignation by the people for whom it was intended; and these feelings were not lessened when the names of the nominee members were published.

Sir Garnet Wolseley has, unjustly as it seems to me, had to bear much of the odium of what the Boers called this mockery of free institutions. According to Sir M. Hicks-Beach's despatch introducing it, it was framed upon lines recommended by Sir Bartle Frere, and the only apology for it is that it professed to be merely temporary. The fact is that the country had been driven into such a state of disloyalty by the long delay of the Colonial Office in giving it representative institutions, that it had now become dangerous to grant them at all. In fact, things had arrived at such a pass that no other government was possible but such as that with which Russia governs Poland.

It has been mentioned above that Sir Garnet Wolseley had arrested Mr. W. Pretorius and Secretary Bok on a charge of high treason, for forwarding him the resolution of the December mass meeting. Pretorius was brought to trial, but the proceedings were discontinued after they had lasted three days. With an inconsistency not to have been expected from Sir Garnet Wolseley, Pretorius was shortly after offered a seat in the Executive Council. The offer was received with disdain.

Two causes probably prevented the rebellion which ultimately broke out in December from breaking out at the period at which I have now arrived. One was the large number of troops disposable in the country, in consequence of the close of the Zulu war and the Secocoeni campaign; the second, the possible approaching change of Ministry in England. Some expressions

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in Mr. Gladstone's Midlothian speeches, and some other utterances of public men on the same side, had been duly marked by the Boer leaders, and gave them strong hopes that if the Liberal party came into office every grievance would be redressed. In this hope it was determined to wait and to confine immediate action to endeavouring to influence the Cape Parliament against agreeing to any step in furtherance of South African Confederation. Krüger and Joubert proceeded to Cape Town on this errand in the spring of 1880. In the meantime, the elections took place, and Mr. Gladstone came into office. Advantage of the change of Ministry was immediately taken by the delegates to address Mr. Gladstone. The answer of the Liberal Government to this memorial is dated June 8, and gave the final blow to the hopes which alone had induced the Boers to refrain so long from open rebellion. It was in these terms: "Our judgment is that the Queen cannot be advised to relinquish the Transvaal."

It is difficult now to understand the indifference with which the Local Government, including the highest officials in the land, seems to have viewed the train of events which had occurred since Sir Bartle Frere's meeting with the Boer leaders in April, 1879, every one of which was clearly a further step to the point when disaffection culminates in open rebellion. Sir Garnet Wolseley has publicly shown that he had no illusions as far back as October, 1879, and he intimates in his despatch of that date that neither had Sir O. Lanyon. Since then nothing had occurred to sooth or moderate Boer irritation—much to increase it. The Constitution had been received with unconcealed anger and disdain. Pretorius, an eminent and popular leader, had been arrested, but with so little judgment that his release had been inevitable, to the natural triumph of the Boers. The hated tax-gatherer had been more busy than at any previous period since annexation. The Pretoria officials, as the Administration acquired shape and order, had become a class separated by as distinct a line of demarcation from the Dutch, and even the English population, as exists between the white hierarchy of India and the dark-skinned subject races. Lastly, the reply of the new Liberal Government had demolished the last hope that the Act of Annexation would be annulled. Nevertheless, with a fatuity which now seems extraordinary, the large body of English troops in the country, which had been the main support of order, was allowed to dwindle away until not a single mounted soldier, and only two weak regiments of infantry, remained. Either the officials, from the Landrosts up to the Governor, were deceived, or Boer courage and enterprise were so entirely discredited that a few companies of British infantry,

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scattered over a country bigger than France, were thought equal to meet any emergency that could arise.

Then at last occurred the two incidents which fired the train. These were, first, the prosecution of Celliers for publishing in the Dutch *Volkstemm* an advertisement by which 112 burgers of Wakkerstroem bound themselves not to pay their quit-rents except to the lawfully-constituted authorities of the South African Republic; and, second, the forcible resistance of the Boer farmer, Bezuidenhoot, to the sale of a waggon distrained near Potchefstroom for non-payment of arrears of taxes. But the present narrative of events may be fitly concluded at this point.

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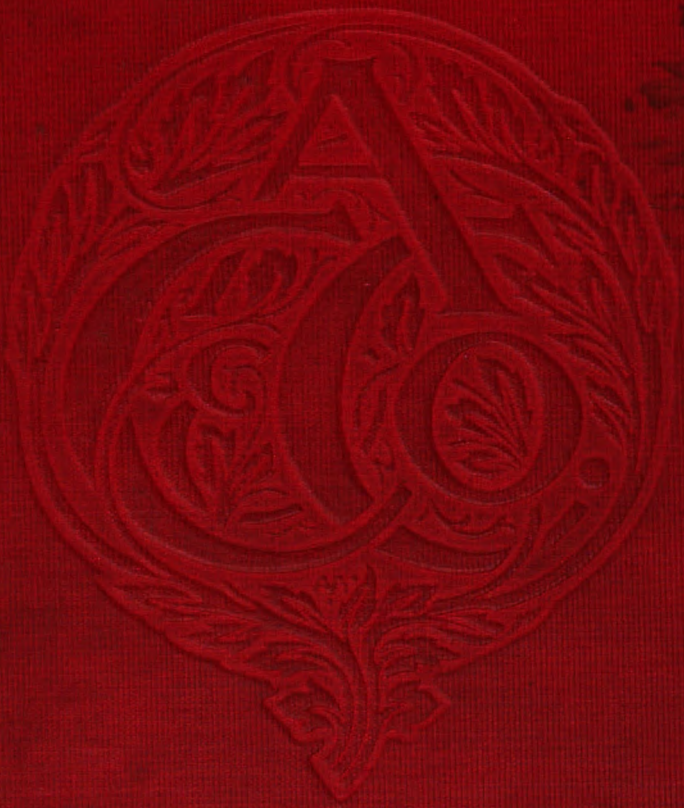

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